SECTION 02

THE PLANNING PROCESS & CLOSING THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GAP
PLAN ORGANIZATION
Following the Acknowledgments and Executive Summary this Plan contains sections on:
• Planning Process and the community engagement gap
• The southwest gap
• The management gap.

The following paragraphs summarize the contents of each section. Exhibit 2.1 describes the major steps in the development and adoption of the Plan.

The Planning Process and the community engagement gap section of the Plan describes:
• The public participation plan and time-line
• Outdoor recreation forum
• Public meetings
• Stakeholder meetings
• Community input

These processes and outcomes of various public outreach events achieved the maximum engagement possible with the extensive number of individuals, communities, agencies and stakeholders that helped shape the Plan and its recommendations. This section also plans for fostering healthy community input and feedback for the future of the Ring.

The southwest gap section focuses on closing the existing physical gap in the Ring. This section presents:
• Technical analysis
• Land use studies
• Trail suitability
• Trail context and ownership and right-of-way analysis
• Proposed trail corridor

This desktop and field analysis shaped the proposed trail corridor to complete the Ring. The proposed trail corridor is presented in a holistic and segment-by-segment approach to best provide an understanding of the challenges and opportunities that exist in completing the Ring.

The management gap section covers:
• Management and operational strategies
• Management direction for the total length of the trail
• Maintenance of the Ring
• A review of existing and potential resources for staffing, marketing, funding and operations
• Trail design standards for the Ring

MASTER PLAN PROCESS

Exhibit 2.1
Develop a Master Plan addressing future construction phases on the non-motorized, multi-modal trail alignment of the southwest portion of the Ring between Pancake Rocks and USFS Road 376 at the entrance of the Colorado Springs Utilities South Slope watershed.

Identify a potential trail corridor that is scenic and provides opportunities for camping, hiking, trail running, mountain biking and equestrian use. The trail corridor alignment should consider construction, maintenance and long-term sustainability.

Engage municipalities, property owners, government agencies including State, USFS, BLM, CPW and interested citizens in a public planning process that promotes open dialogue and collaboration.

In conjunction with the Plan, develop a separate implementation plan and associated cost estimates for program implementation and project phasing.

Identify long-term sustainability strategies that cover funding, management, maintenance and operations for the total length of the Ring.
PLAN PROCESS
The Plan process was conducted in an open and transparent manner to the maximum extent possible. The process included a tiered level of engagement for review and input as materials were developed. The public engagement process included a wide range of stakeholders, community-at-large meetings and discussions with private property owners.

PROJECT TEAM
The primary role of the Project Team was to guide the overall planning process and be deeply engaged in decisions regarding process steps and outcomes. The Project Team also served in leadership roles and assisted in leading and coordinating two unique, value-added community outreach and engagement efforts: The Outdoor Recreation Forum and the Discovery Tour. The Project Team consisted of:

- Susan Davies - Executive Director (TOSC)
- Mike Rigney - Project Manager (TOSC)
- Larry Larsen - Advocacy Committee Member (TOSC)
- Debbie Bibb - Former Board Member (TOSC)
- Glenn Carlson - Board of Directors (TOSC)
- Carol Beckman - Past President (FOTP)

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE
The Stakeholder Committee was engaged in key decision points and milestones throughout the Plan process. The Stakeholder Committee represented a wide group with interest in both the trail for the southwest gap and the regional nature of the project representing Teller and El Paso counties. This broad perspective encouraged a robust conversation about the vision for the Ring, guided discussions related to management and operations and helped establish overall design standards of the trail.

The City of Cripple Creek and the City of Victor have been active partners in this project and worked to identify potential trails and recreation projects and priorities. Both cities provided extensive staff time to the planning process and meeting space for gatherings. Their support of the planning process has been invaluable in defining the preferred trail corridor to close the southwest gap in the Ring.

CPW and USFS provided expertise and actively participated in the planning process contributing to the overall trail alignment to close the southwest gap and develop practical implementation strategies.
STAKEHOLDERS

The Project Team and Consultant Team recognize the following local, state and federal agencies and stakeholders for their significant commitment of time and energy towards this effort. The success of this plan is a result of this commitment.

Bureau of Land Management - BLM
(Keith Berger & Kalem Lenard)
City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
(Tilah Larson & Karen Palus)
City of Cripple Creek
(Connie Dodrill, Bill Gray & Steve Kitzman)
City of Manitou Springs
(Wade Burkholder)
City of Victor
(Debra Downs & Becky Frank)
City of Woodland Park
(Cindy Keating)

Colorado Parks and Wildlife - CPW
(Nick Dellaca, Brian Dreher, Tim Kroening, Frank McGee, Robert Seel & Julie Stiver)
Colorado Springs Utilities - CSU
(Kim Gortz & Mark Shea)

El Paso County
(Jason Meyer & Tim Wolken)
El Pomar Heritage Series
(Walt Hecox)

Great Outdoors Colorado - GOCO
(Drew Stoll)

Newmont Mining Corporation
(Arthur Iverson, Brad Poulson, Penny Riley, Penny Roberts & Lorna Shaw)
Palmer Land Trust
(Rebecca Jewett & Amber Shanklin)
Pikes Peak America's Mountain
(Sandy Elliott & Jack Glavan)
Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance - PPORA
(Becky Leinweber & David Leinweber)
Rocky Mountain Field Institute - RMFI
(Joe Lavorini)

Southern Teller County Focus Group
(Mark Perdew & Ruth Zalewski)
State of Colorado
(Luis Benitez & Alex Dean)
Teller County
(Sheryl Decker)

United States Forest Service - USFS
(Jeff Hovermale & Oscar Martinez)
CONSULTANT TEAM
The Consultant Team was selected by TOSC to develop this Plan to close the southwest gap in the Ring. The Consultant Team provided expertise in land planning, leadership, public involvement, natural and cultural resources, trail design and corridor alignment. The Members of the Consulting Team included:

- N.E.S. Inc. - Project lead, Planning and Landscape Architecture
- Bachman PR - Community Engagement
- ERO Natural Resources - Natural and Cultural Resource Specialists
- TAPIS Associates. - Trail Design

COMMUNITY AT LARGE
Community meetings were conducted to engage the broad community and all interested stakeholders. Meeting notification methods included email notification, media press releases, personal invitations, and word-of-mouth notices. Community meetings were conducted at milestones during the Plan process to facilitate citizen input and vision. These processes helped shape the Plan and its recommendations.

KEY PRIVATE PROPERTY & OUTDOOR BUSINESS OWNERS
The Newmont Mine and other private property owners along the trail corridor were engaged for input on preferred trail alignments and project proposals. The business community was engaged in public meetings and stakeholder meetings to provide input on the economic impacts of trail corridor alternatives and leveraging tourism opportunities. The feedback received from the business community identified opportunities for the proposed trail corridor to enhance and revitalize the outdoor recreation tourism in the areas surrounding the southwest gap in the Ring.
PROJECT APPROACH

THE SOUTHWEST GAP

Technical analysis of the identified alternative trail corridors to close the southwest gap in the Ring provided an in-depth understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with each corridor. This analysis included three primary areas of focus: natural and cultural resources, trail sustainability and context, and property ownership and land use restrictions. Through technical analysis, trail corridors and corridor combinations were explored. The information gleaned through the technical analysis phase was valuable and shared as part of the community engagement efforts. This information was compiled and mapped as an important tool for critical decision making. Technical analysis, land use studies, trail suitability, trail context, ownership and rights-of-way analysis all shaped the alignment of the proposed trail corridor to close the southwest gap in the Ring.

The proposed trail corridor is presented in a holistic and segment-by-segment approach to best provide an understanding of the challenges and opportunities that exist in closing the southwest gap. Potential corridors were assessed for their environmental and cultural impacts. Discussion with governmental agencies including the cities of Cripple Creek and Victor, Teller County, BLM, USFS, CPW and Colorado Springs Utilities identified locations for trail amenities, trailheads, parking, wayfinding signage and proposed site furnishings to include benches and trash receptacles. Consideration and comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of these corridors provided a range of possibilities for the proposed trail corridor.

The natural resource analysis identified significant “red flag” issues for implementation and development. This information was used to inform the trail alignment refinement and decision-making process. The Consultant Team compiled and summarized existing documentation on wildlife issues within the project area through desktop analysis identifying any significant issues for the opportunities and constraints analysis. Data collection was based on existing plans and documents, readily available resource information, database and mapping information. Planning-level maps of wildlife habitat were created through the process.

The conservation of wildlife habitat is an important component of the Ring planning process. The Consultant and Project teams coordinated with CPW staff and bighorn sheep experts to understand and document the issues and sensitivity of different areas to potential trail impacts. An evaluation of unpublished technical data (e.g., telemetry data or population studies) as well as scientific literature related to bighorn sheep and recreation impacts was conducted to understand the scientific basis for the issues and to find opportunities for trail corridors or management programs that either avoid or minimize impacts to the bighorn sheep population.

Watershed protection is important to the planning process to complete the southwest gap. The cities of Victor and Cripple Creek rely on water sources within the area of the southwest gap which include part of the West Beaver Creek drainage on the western flank of Pikes Peak. Through mapping, analysis and consultation with the Cities of Victor and Cripple Creek, critical resource areas were avoided to minimize impacts to the Victor and Cripple Creek watersheds.

Available mapping and county records were used to evaluate property owners and rights-of-way opportunities along the alternative trail corridors. A key component of the analysis included individual meetings with key property owners to gauge their desire to entertain the trail corridor traveling through their property. Information from these meetings and from the trail suitability analysis was mapped and used in facilitated discussions with stakeholders and in the community engagement process and also formed the basis for the trail design recommendations.

THE MANAGEMENT GAP

Long-term sustainability of the Ring requires a management plan. The Ring poses unique challenges crossing multiple political and organizational jurisdictions and property ownership scenarios. The Consultant Team evaluated six management programs with similar attributes to the Ring. A review of benchmark management programs, discussed in detail in the management gap section of this Plan, provided a point of reference for the Ring. Analysis of these management programs provided an understanding of why they worked and how to apply their traits to the unique characteristics of the Ring.
THE COMMUNITY GAP
The Project Team developed a webpage on the TOSC website and provided social media presence as part of the Public Outreach Plan to inform the public about the Ring project. The webpage provided a platform to post updates, meeting agendas and notes to inform the public on the progress of the Master Plan efforts. Public meetings were conducted to take input, inform the public about the plan and future implementation strategies and to maintain transparency. These meetings provided opportunities for the public to comment on the goals and processes for the Plan and sought input on the alignment of the Ring.

One of the most effective ways for building enthusiasm for the project with the public was by telling the story of the current trail experience and demonstrating the potential awaiting future adventurers choosing the Ring. A traditional website platform, e-newsletters, emails and personal outreach to property owners and stakeholders built and encouraged participation in the Master Plan process. Specific tasks and deliverables accomplished included:

- Website maintained with ongoing updates
- E-newsletters
- Posters, flyers, signs, and stickers
- Personal outreach to key stakeholders and property owners
- Support to TOSC and FOTP

Several direct and creative venues for community participation were provided, given the large geographic distances and the need for efficiencies, including:

- Stakeholder meetings
- Two community meetings
- Meetings in the Victor and Cripple Creek area focused on opportunities and issues specific to their communities for completing the southwest gap
- Small listening sessions
- A community symposium with representatives from the Colorado Tourism Office, PPORA and multiple front range community governments and economic development offices

Utilizing established professional relationships with political leaders, business owners and property owners within Teller County, City of Victor, City of Cripple Creek and the area along the trail corridor allowed the Plan to develop in harmony with the surrounding political landscape. Small group and individual listening sessions provided opportunities to share information about the Ring and planning process. One-on-one meetings provided opportunities for understanding private property issues and concerns. These informal visits focused on relationship building and provided groundwork for building trust for future land acquisition or easement acquisition efforts.
COMMUNITY INPUT

A Public Outreach Plan included public engagement methods designed to increase the public’s awareness of and participation in the overall project and the planning process for creating the Plan. Public participation was solicited at all stages of plan development. (Exhibits 2.4 & 2.5)

The public participation process for the Plan was systematic and inclusive. Representatives from various jurisdictions came together and met collaboratively over several months to arrive at a Plan that all could support. Through meeting discussions, stakeholders agreed the vision expressed in the 1999 Multi-Use Plan was still relevant and solidly on target today. They further expanded those initiatives by adding consideration for wildlife resources and reiterating the need for watershed protection.

Stakeholders worked to find balance between economic development opportunities for the communities and stewardship of the land. A general consensus was reached that more energy and funding will be going to the Ring effort given the governor’s designation, GOCO grant, outdoor recreation industry growth, economic development and the spectrum of the Ring from an international destination to a local wilderness experience.

The public process solicited input that informed the potential trail corridors and recommendations of this Plan. Input and feedback gathered through the public meetings, workshops and stakeholder interviews also helped shape and inform the final recommendations of the Plan. Multiple public and stakeholder meetings and other events facilitated a consensus on priority management and operation issues to consider throughout the Plan.

Exhibit 2.4

OBJECTIVES

- Communicate accurate and consistent messages about the Plan process to stakeholders and the public using a variety of communication methods and tools
- Increase public awareness, promote public participation in the process and collect public input/feedback
- Ensure public meetings were easily accessible to the public to encourage broad participation and in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Ensure citizens were informed and had timely notification and access to meetings encouraging participation and feedback
June 2017
Website and social media
Online presence for Ring the Peak established

Sept. 8 2017
The Discovery Tour Sunrise Hike
Build enthusiasm for the Ring and tell the story of the experience that awaits future trail explorers.

Sept. 16 2017
The Discovery Tour Mountain Bike Day
Explore the opportunities available to cyclists of all abilities along the Ring. Receive feedback on the wants and needs of cyclists.

Oct. 11 2017
Stake Holder Meeting #2
Review management options and technical data

Jan. 23 2018
Stakeholder Meeting #3
Narrow alignments based on technical data and ownership. Recommendations on management

Sept. 2 2017
The Discovery Tour Bike Race
Garner feedback on the appeal of the Ring as a destination trail for long distance enthusiasts

Sept. 13 2017
Stakeholder Meeting #1
Discuss the relevancy of 1999 Plan and refine vision, challenges and opportunities for the Ring

Sept. 30 2017
The Discovery Tour Fall Colors Hike
Raise the public’s awareness of what the Ring trail system is and why closing the gap is important

Nov. 18 2017
Envision the Outdoors Forum & Public Meeting #1
Provide an opportunity for the public to contribute to the vision of the Ring. Panel discussion of the Ring and presentations from community leaders

Feb. 13 2018
Public Meeting #2
Review of Master Plan public input and process to date. Discussion of key issues to the Ring success. Presented the site inventory and analysis and updates to the Plan moving forward
DISCOVERY TOUR
The month of September 2017 was designated to get people outdoors and explore the various opportunities of the Ring. Biking, hiking and equestrian events were scheduled each weekend in September to engage and familiarize people with available outdoor activities on the existing Ring. Connecting with individual user groups assisted in identifying a big-picture vision for the Ring that considers the experience of each user group. The Discovery Tour was an opportunity to receive feedback on strategies for maintaining a balance between economic benefits for small business and preservation of wildlife habitat and natural resources.

The Discovery Tour introduced local opportunities for smaller communities surrounding the Ring. The program and results of Discovery Tour events are described on the following page. People from all walks of life explored a variety of existing segments of the Ring Trail and most participants discovered new recreational opportunities through the events.

The equestrian event for the Discovery Tour was unfortunately cancelled due to weather. However, the equestrian community provided valuable input and active participation throughout the development of this Plan.
THE RING THE PEAK BIKE RACE
The Discovery Tour Bike Ride took riders over a variety of fun and challenging trails. The ride started in Teller County’s Catamount Ranch Open Space at Edlowe Road and quickly entered the North Slope Recreation Area on the Limber Pine Trail. It followed an old Jeep road and a trail connecting to Horsethief Park. Once back in North Slope, the group explored opportunities to bike on other North Slope trails before returning to the Edlowe Road trailhead.

THE RING SUNRISE HIKE
The Ring Sunrise Hike took participants towards the top of Iron Mountain in Manitou Springs. The group hiked the Intemann Trail heading east toward the Iron Mountain Trail with a turn-around at Pawnee. The group hike built enthusiasm for the Ring while telling the story of the experience awaiting future trail explorers.

MOUNTAIN BIKE DAY
The Discovery Tour Bike Ride took riders over a variety of fun and challenging trails. The ride started in Teller County’s Catamount Ranch Open Space at Edlowe Road and quickly entered the North Slope Recreation Area on the Limber Pine Trail. It followed an old Jeep road and a trail connecting to Horsethief Park. Once back in North Slope, the group explored opportunities to bike on other North Slope trails before returning to the Edlowe Road trailhead.

THE RING FALL COLORS HIKE
The Ring the Peak Discovery Tour ended the month with two Fall Colors hikes over beautiful trails in Teller County. These Fall Colors hikes explored trails in the Catamount Ranch Open Space, the North Slope Recreation Area and Horsethief Park. The publicity from social media and FOX21 Morning News covering these Fall Colors Hikes led to the high participation rates and informed recreationists who were previously unaware of the Ring’s existence.
FORUM & PUBLIC MEETINGS

Two public meetings and a public forum were conducted at the Heritage Center in Cripple Creek. The meetings and forum encouraged participants to provide input on a variety of topics associated with the Ring such as potential trail corridors and recommendations for this Plan.

OUTDOOR RECREATION FORUM

The Outdoor Recreation Forum (Forum) held on November 18, 2017 involved two different panels addressing how communities develop successful outdoor recreation strategies leveraging tourism and then envisioning what success looks like for the state, region, and the Ring. The Forum focused on demonstrating economic development benefits from tourist communities through a panel discussion of the proposed Plan. The Forum presented panels of representatives from the Colorado Tourism Office, subject matter experts and economic development and funding specialists.

The Forum gave stakeholders and the public an opportunity to learn about the State’s objectives in the outdoor recreation industry as well as to encourage discussion on alternatives. The first panel comprised representatives from communities that embrace and explore potential links between outdoor recreation and economic development. The second panel comprised a diverse group of experts offering a broad range of perspectives. Each panelist relayed their opinions on the vast opportunities and future challenges related to outdoor recreation and envisioned what success could potentially look like for Colorado, the Pikes Peak region and the Ring.

PUBLIC MEETING #1

The first public meeting was held in conjunction with the Forum. The Project Team presented the Master Plan process and time-line, reviewed existing conditions, provided project givens (those aspects of the project that cannot be changed) and solicited public input to help inform the Plan. The meeting included a small-group workshop that asked participants to consider the larger vision for the Ring through the southwest gap and throughout the entire trail. The task was to identify the routes and share their vision for the master plan. The results of the Forum and first public meeting are presented on the following pages.
Outdoor Forum Results

Opportunities & Constraints

Sensitive resources may require limiting the number of users, such as watershed and water protection planning. Vegetation treatment for forest health and sheep habitat should be considered. Planning should follow a broad landscape approach. Limited cell phone coverage and emergency services. Natural resources are important to route and access. Fire mitigation and preventative wildfire solutions should be throughout the entire area. Bring together existing programs for operation and management.

Priorities & Needs

Utilize non-traditional funding options through a combination of private business, state and local organizations. A team effort is necessary, because one group cannot do it alone. There are funding opportunities for trail development and renewed interest at state level in outdoor recreation industry. The Ring could be an international attraction or a simple wilderness experience for locals. State emphasis is on Destination Tourism. The Ring needs to connect to communities to realize economic benefits, communities should be portals to access trail. Consider outfitters, guides, shuttles, yurts, B&B’s, campgrounds, restaurants and hotels. The Ring has a complex approval process.

User Experience


Management & Operations

Address fire, illegal camping, trespass and trash issues. Consider seasonal access. The Ring will need a management entity and law enforcement. Consider a permit or fee to pay for management and compliance with rules. Consider outfitter guides and commercial use for management role. Identify responsibility for easement acquisition, management and fundraising. Consider private property expectations. Watershed protection is a key local concern. Include educational and interpretive opportunities, way-finding and signage. Establish a single organization for marketing.
“Plan for a variety of mixed user groups”

“Make it a true multi-use experience with loops and spurs”

“Consider a hut system and parking lots for revenue”

“Rest stops with picnic tables parallel to Lazy S Ranch”

“Consider shuttle service and other parking revenue opportunities”

“Investigate horse and bike rentals”

“The trail should go west by Lazy S Ranch”

“The trail should be off the road, but not too far”

“Keep in mind that with an upper route, Dome Rock is closed half the year”

“Ensure multiple connection points, such as a stop at the Hwy 81 turnoff area”

“Reservation system for huts and hiking and a permits system”

“Lazy S Ranch and its plateau could be a drainage issue”

“Consider places for motorized and equestrian use”

“Build a welcome center using the existing KOA at Gillette Flats”

“There are hazards along Gold Camp, Old Stage and Lower Gold Camp Rd”

“Define what constitutes a wilderness experience, it does not have to be over done”

“Consider that Teller County no longer allows septic tanks. The Mine has its own holding tanks for septic.”

“Use existing roads and find both an upper and lower route to get around closures”

“Create a true wilderness (backcountry) experience”
Small Group Workshop on Route & Alignment
November 18, 2017

“Route(s) that accomplish all goals”
“Creating an environment to experience nature in pristine conditions”
“Legacy resource management”
“Way-finding and good signage”

“The trail needs to generate revenue and be self-sustaining”
“Address concerns over effective trail management and a system of enforcement”
“Promote a ‘Get it Done’ attitude”
“Consider amenities like trash, RVs and an education building”

“Include wilderness education programs”
“Make it both a back-country and family-friendly experience”
“Contribute to the economic health of Victor & Cripple Creek”

“Tax breaks for property owners who grant trail easements”
“Adopt-a-Trail revenue should be designated to specific trail sections”
“Find a route around Bison Reservoir”
PUBLIC MEETING #2

The second public meeting for the Ring was held on February 13, 2018. A presentation began the meeting covering topics related to the project schedule, the results of previous community outreach events and meetings, input from stakeholder groups, the Plan process, inventory analysis and important considerations for closing the southwest gap in the Ring. The project overview looked at the various aspects of user experience, property ownership, natural resources, economic development and management and operations. The current political landscape was another consideration as the state is marketing outdoor recreation and offers funding to build trails. The opportunities, challenges and partnerships possible for the potential trail corridors of the Ring were brought to the forefront as stakeholders shared their vision identifying a family friendly varied user experience from a backcountry to OHV, that protects natural resources, watersheds and reservoirs as well as forest management and encourages economic development. After identifying and describing these givens, the Project Team produced a concept identifying with broad lines, four different potential routes to close the southwest gap in the Ring.

At this point in the meeting, the audience broke out into small groups. The participants were asked to indicate on maps of the potential routes, their feedback on the vision, goals, and resources, indicating positives and negatives about the Plan, and offer further suggestions on alignment and user experience (Exhibit 2.6).

LISTENING SESSIONS

Throughout the Plan process, listening sessions were held with property owners, CPW, USFS, BLM, Colorado Springs Utilities, local, state and federal government agencies and interested citizens and residents. These one-to-one and small group listening meetings were conducted to gather input on issues and recommendations for improvements that also helped shape the Plan.

STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders collaborated on the Ring project during three large group meetings at the Heritage Center in Cripple Creek. Each meeting examined and explored different components of the Ring with an emphasis on strategies for closing the community, southwest and management gaps.

The Top Strengths of the Overall Trail System

“Good for bikes around Victor/Cripple Creek”
“The low route is a great trail”
“Includes OHV”
“Good connection trail between Victor & Cripple Creek”
“Bring trails down to the cities to act as portals and gateways for economic development”
“A winner for multi-use because of the many routes and family, ADA opportunities near towns”
“The low route is especially good for multi-use”
“Victor/Cripple Creek will need to benefit for this to benefit Teller County residents”
“It incorporates the local communities as portals to the trail system”

The Top Weaknesses of the Overall Trail System

“Beetle kill trees abound in the area”
“Trail is next to the road”
“Horse and sheep interaction could be a problem around Gold Camp Road”
“Seasonal route is not good for bikes and is above treeline”
“Not enough enforcement for illegal camping on Gold Camp Road”
“Refine high route to stay below treeline and sheep view”
“The seasonal route crosses into critical sheep habitat”

Exhibit 2.6
MEETING #1
The first stakeholder meeting was conducted September 13, 2017. Stakeholders came together to identify the vision, opportunities and challenges of the Ring and to review the 1999 Pikes Peak Multi-Use Plan for relevancy and guidance in the development of the Plan. While examining the 1999 Pikes Peak Multi-Use Plan, there was consensus among stakeholders that watershed protection will remain important and forest health is at the forefront of the discussion with emphasis on the impacts of watershed protection. Wildlife habitat and economic development were included as important facets of the Ring, though they are not mentioned in the 1999 Pikes Peak Multi-Use Plan.

Stakeholders identified issues and opportunities related to user experience, natural resources, the political landscape, economic development and management and petitions for the Ring in relation to the 1999 Pikes Peak Multi-Use Plan.

MEETING #2
The second stakeholder meeting was conducted October 11, 2017. Results of the first stakeholder meeting were reviewed including issues and opportunities for the project, a management report and the updated vision for the Ring. The stakeholders agreed the Ring project should be addressed in three distinct gaps: the southwest gap, the operations and management gap and the community engagement gap. The meeting addressed management and technical data from desktop and field analysis of the Ring.

The stakeholders reviewed responses from a survey distributed to organizations throughout the country that successfully manage trails similar to the Ring and identified key takeaways from each organization. Stakeholders discussed the value of having an organization take on the Ring in its entirety. They suggested that the Ring needs to be marketed and managed from a global perspective and as an entire trail entity to provide more efficiencies. Stakeholders agreed the Ring needs a sustainable model and the proposed trail corridor will influence what is needed.

Victor and Cripple Creek stakeholders desired the creation of a spur trail to serve as a community connector. The stakeholders agreed the management plan for a community connector trail through these communities would be different from the Plan for the overall Ring and closing the southwest gap. Stakeholders agreed that typical trail users generally prefer to be below tree line; a strategy that makes it possible to meet the needs of both bighorn sheep and trail users. During this meeting CPW, USFS and the cities of Cripple Creek and Victor expressed their support for the Ring.

MEETING #3
The third stakeholder meeting was conducted January 23, 2018. Stakeholders reviewed feedback and responses from the various public engagement events that occurred previously in connection with the Ring. This information, in addition to technical analysis and stakeholder discussion, guided the refinement of the Ring trail corridor through the southwest gap with the agreement that the community connector trail with Victor and Cripple Creek as portals should be separate from the Plan. Various routes required travel along roads and through private property. Stakeholders agreed rights-of-way is a challenge in spots, as is travel along roads such as HWY 67, CR 81 and Gold Camp Road. There are viewshed and open space possibilities, but they will require partnerships with the Newmont Mine, private property owners and multiple jurisdictions. Stakeholders worked together to develop a phased approach to closing the southwest gap in the Ring. Stakeholders agreed there would be phases to implementing the Plan, although many aspects could happen concurrently, such as a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process for federal lands and pursuing private property acquisitions.
ROUTE ALTERNATIVES

As part of the public input process and in garnering feedback from stakeholders, the Consultant Team identified four potential trail corridors to close the southwest gap. The goal was to develop a trail corridor that would best satisfy wants and needs expressed by the community, public and private entities and stakeholders to close the southwest gap in the Ring. Therefore, all four trail corridors (Exhibit 2.7) were studied, analyzed and discussed in detail.

The four trail corridor alternatives include:

- A High Seasonal Corridor near treeline
- A Middle Corridor through the reservoirs in the gap
- A Year-Round Corridor that follows the existing road alignment
- A Community Connector through Victor and Cripple Creek
YEAR-ROUND CORRIDOR
The Year-round Corridor (Exhibit 2.8) had several potential configurations involving new trail corridor development and construction to the east and west, while following the Gold Camp Road corridor and a former railroad grade on the Newmont Mine property. The trail would be within easements along Gold Camp Road and would require acquiring private property or trail easements. This alignment offers excellent viewshed and open space possibilities. It will require partnerships with the Newmont Mine, private property owners, and multiple jurisdictions.

MIDDLE CORRIDOR
The Middle Corridor (Exhibit 2.10) was proposed to pass near the Cripple Creek and Bison Reservoirs and an extensive number of private properties. To protect and limit disturbance, such as social trails, to watersheds, wildlife and reservoirs as expressed in the Pikes Peak Multi-Use Plan and through feedback from public comment, in addition to the large number of private properties that would require acquisition of access easements, the Middle Corridor was eventually eliminated from consideration.

COMMUNITY CONNECTOR
The Community Connector (Exhibit 2.9) through Victor and Cripple Creek would create links to an existing extensive trail system. Victor and Cripple Creek would function as community connector portals allowing for economic development. This would provide year-round trail access to the communities and expand the selection of trails for off-highway vehicle use in the area. This trail corridor would go through downtown Cripple Creek along a planned trail and connect with a trailhead near the Gillett site at the junction of HWY 67 and CR 81. Locating the Community Connector through the Newmont Mine property would require an access easement/agreement.

SEASONAL HIGH CORRIDOR
The Seasonal High Corridor (Exhibit 2.11) would traverse the alpine ecosystem near tree line. This Corridor would be open on a limited seasonal basis and closed for bighorn sheep lambing and winter habitat from December to July. Stakeholders expressed concerns that managing a seasonal closure would present challenges for trail closure enforcement and the prevention of social trail formation that could affect wildlife habitat, trail erosion and native vegetation. Construction of the seasonal corridor and trail use would bisect critical habitats for bighorn sheep and reduce available habitat, negatively impacting the population. Due to the seasonal nature of the trail, the potential for social trails and possible impacts to wildlife the Seasonal High Corridor was eventually eliminated from consideration.
Planning Steps Completed to Close the Community Gap

- Maintain a website to inform and educate the public on the Plan process, events and participation opportunities.
- Publish and distribute e-newsletters to build relationships with the community through regular communication of high-value information.
- Maintain ongoing personal outreach to stakeholders and property owners to build relationships integral to closing the southwest gap and success of the Plan. Conduct small group meetings and individual interviews.
- Support TOSC and FOTP in the Ring “Discovery Tour”.
- Host a community symposium and forum in partnership with the Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance.
- Conduct public meetings and workshops to inform the public of the goals and processes and receive input on trail alignment.
- Post meeting summaries from the symposium, forum and the public meetings on the project website and distribute via e-newsletters.
- Present to town councils and commissioners offering information about the Ring process and seek feedback.
- Provide written reports of key findings and issues from each meeting.
- Provide an evaluation of the key findings and issues to inform the selection of a proposed trail corridor to close the southwest gap in the Ring.