

**What can fit on Park and Ride lot
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City Council evaluates options for land around proposed YMCA
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The future of Ketchum's most-debated patch of dirt—the city-owned Park and Ride lot—became somewhat clearer this week.

In a long-awaited discussion Monday, March 7, Ketchum City Council members started to examine exactly what civic facilities could be squeezed on the 5.8-acre parcel, located at the corner of Warm Springs and Saddle roads.

The discussion arose from an ongoing debate over how much usable space would be available on the site after 2.6 acres reserved for the proposed Wood River Community YMCA are set aside. In January, Mayor Ed Simon and the council asked that the first steps be taken toward developing a master plan for the entire parcel, including the YMCA facility.

On Monday, architect Jim Ruscitto, volunteering for the city, presented detailed schematics of seven different scenarios for developing the long-vacant parcel.

City leaders were pleasantly surprised upon seeing that the site could accommodate various combinations of parking facilities, community housing, historic structures and outdoor-recreation facilities, in addition to the proposed 84,000-square-foot YMCA recreational center.

Simon said he wishes the city had done the study earlier, noting that seeing the options made him more "comfortable" with the city's plan to give control of nearly half the parcel to the Ketchum-based YMCA group.

The seven scenarios presented by Ruscitto each propose various intensities of use of the Park and Ride lot.

All call for building the YMCA and developing public parking in the center of the site. Most propose establishing a complex of historic buildings on the narrow south end, although installation of a public outdoor swimming pool is also contemplated there. Three of the scenarios call for developing community housing on parts of the north end. Another portrays a complex of six public tennis courts on the north end.

In the end, council members all preferred two options that call for developing community housing on the north end of the parcel.

"Scheme D," favored to varying degrees by three council members, proposes:

- A two-level parking facility on the north end of the site that could accommodate approximately 450 cars.
- A complex of 24 community-housing units, stretched north to south between the parking facility and Saddle Road.
- An outdoor swimming pool immediately south of the YMCA complex.
- A small parking lot and complex of historic structures on the far south end of the parcel.

"Scheme E," also favored by some city leaders, proposes concentrating the community-housing complex on the far north end.

Council members did not take any formal action Monday to establish one of the schemes as an official master plan. However, they did direct Planning Director Harold Moniz to begin researching a plan to rezone the site from General Residential to Tourist, a designation that would allow more intensive use.

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