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APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

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The W.A. Ranches at the University of Calgary Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) establishes a thirty-year vision that supports the university’s long-term academic and research goals, as well as the Eyes High strategic vision. Approved by the University of Calgary Board of Governors in June 2020, the LRDP guides future development and sets a foundation for future planning documents to build upon.

Developed through a planning and community consultation process beginning in April 2019, the LRDP provides a vision, guiding principles and a planning framework for development to ensure W.A. Ranches continues to be both a working ranch, and a centre of research, education, and community outreach for the University of Calgary.

Two supporting documents are included as part of the complete LRDP:

- University of Calgary Consultation Framework: Long Range Development Plan and Substantial Development is a document that sets out the consultation protocol for the LRDP and future substantial developments (Appendix A.2)
- Consultation Report: W.A. Ranches Long Range Development Plan Consultation Report is a detailed report on the consultation process (Appendix A.3)

The LRDP sets a land development outlook for the next 30 years, but it does not provide a time frame for development. Instead, it puts in place overarching guidelines and parameters to ensure W.A. Ranches develops in a holistic manner, responds to changing needs and engages the communities we both serve and lead.
2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND

With roots that date back more than a century, the University of Calgary officially achieved autonomy in 1966. More than 30,000 students are currently enrolled in undergraduate, graduate and professional degree programs. The University of Calgary is one of the largest employers in Calgary with approximately 1,800 academic staff actively engaged in research, scholarship and teaching in Canada and around the world.

In September 2018, J.C. (Jack) Anderson and Wynne Chisholm announced their gift of W.A. Ranches — their 19,000-acre, 1,000-head cattle ranch operation north of Cochrane, AB — to the University of Calgary. Their gift will fundamentally transform the university’s Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (UCVM) by creating a world-class teaching, learning and research facility on a working cattle ranch.

W.A. Ranches will allow the university to create a centre of excellence for beef cattle research, including having and maintaining its own research herd. It will be a dedicated facility for research, teaching and learning, community engagement and outreach through integrated and interdisciplinary cattle research programs, including continued support of the Anderson-Chisholm Chair in Animal Care and Welfare, the Alberta 4-H and other programs that support youth in agriculture.

The ranch will be an interdisciplinary hub, helping to fulfill UCVM’s vision to be a national leader through the development of educational, evidence-based and community programs to solve complex problems in animal-human-environmental health and public policy. Among its dedicated programs, the ranch will...
foster and promote campus-wide and community-based collaborations that will be interdisciplinary in nature, enabling students, faculty members and those from the broader community to experience research and appreciate the relationship between cattle, the environment and human health.

The W.A. Ranches will serve as a platform for local, national and international outreach for knowledge generation and translation and will promote sustainable and integrated beef production systems. The ranch will also be a cornerstone to develop and launch teaching and learning programs, with a primary focus on beef and cattle research and driven by integrative concepts such as One Health, in order to educate the next generation of veterinary, human and environmental health leaders.

2.2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

A long range development plan (LRDP):
- Describes land use in graphic form with accompanying text describing the current and any future substantial development proposed for W.A. Ranches.
- Outlines where potential development is planned and the type of development that is expected.
- Coordinates and aligns with other university plans, like the academic and research plan for W.A. Ranches.
- Ensures that W.A. Ranches has a framework that creates an overall community and meets academic and research needs, while enhancing our connections to bordering land owners and communities.

The LRDP sets a foundation for future planning documents, which will provide more specific planning and design guidelines.

The LRDP is required by the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA), which is provincial legislation that governs Alberta’s publicly funded post-secondary institutions.
2.3 CONSULTATION PROCESS

As a foundational goal in the University of Calgary’s Eyes High strategic direction, the university is committed to fully integrating with the community and engaging the communities surrounding W.A. Ranches. A framework for consultation, Campus Forward, was approved by the Board of Governors of the University of Calgary that guided our consultation process for the development of the W.A. Ranches Long Range Development Plan (see Appendix A.2 for current, Board approved University of Calgary Consultation Framework: Long Range Development Plan & Substantial Development).

The university conducted community consultations between the fall of 2018 and spring of 2020 to develop the LRDP for W.A. Ranches. This process was led by the university’s Facilities department in collaboration with Government Relations and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. The University of Calgary’s desire to build strong relationships with external stakeholders is the foundation for open, cooperative and efficient engagement. For the development of the LRDP, community stakeholders included:
- Ranch neighbours, including residents, property owners, the Stoney Nakoda First Nation, and local community associations;
- Rocky View County, Mountain View County and MD of Big Horn No. 8;
- Government of Alberta partners;
- Nature Conservancy of Canada; and
- The W.A. Ranches community.

The approach to developing the LRDP included a comprehensive communication strategy to ensure community stakeholders were notified and invited to provide feedback on the development of the LRDP. Neighbours and stakeholders were invited to provide feedback at various stages beginning shortly after the University of Calgary first acquired W.A. Ranches in fall 2018. Over 150 neighbours and stakeholders were engaged, provided input and helped shape the development of the draft LRDP.

Overall, the consultation process was well-received and provided invaluable input for the development of the LRDP. In 2018 and 2019, UCVM worked with faculties across campus and the university’s Facilities department to develop an academic and research plan for W.A. Ranches that identifies immediate, short-, medium- and long-term facility needs to support research, teaching and operations at W.A. Ranches.

Several events and activities were held to engage neighbours and stakeholders in this process including two neighbour Meet & Greets in February and October of 2019, a public open house in March 2020, and online consultation.

For the complete Consultation Report refer to the appendix.
3 VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 VISION

The vision and principles for W.A. Ranches at the University of Calgary are the lens through which we examine our future land use development opportunities. They will guide the development of this Long Range Development Plan.

The vision and principles have evolved from discussions with university staff, academic stakeholders, and senior leadership.

Vision

A working cow-calf ranch, W.A. Ranches will become an internationally recognized research centre of excellence for sustainable and regenerative beef cattle agriculture that uses One Health approaches to guide research and education.
Principle 1
The university is committed to the maintenance of the W.A. Ranches as a fully operational ranch and to doing this in a manner that reflects our commitment to sustainability.

The university is committed to the maintenance of W.A. Ranches as a fully operational ranch. It is precisely because of the ongoing ranch operations that a unique and exciting research opportunity exists. Maintaining daily operations of the ranch not only fulfills a commitment made to the benefactors, staff, and wider community, it also allows the university to further support the economic health of the Province of Alberta, while benefiting from real world experience.

Principle 2
Conduct transdisciplinary research with multiple faculties using a One Health integrative approach.

The many interactions involved in a ranch ecosystem, necessitate research that is reflective of that complexity. A transdisciplinary approach allows the various related and interested fields to collaborate effectively. Creating collaborative hubs, in which transdisciplinary research can occur, is increasingly vital to meet the world's future sustainability challenges including food production, the environmental impact of ranching, and maintaining animal health.

W.A. Ranches provides a platform for collaborative research in an inspiring landscape that reinforces the need to explore ways to preserve the natural world, while providing for society's basic needs.
Principle 3  
Serve the needs of the cattle industry through research and teaching in animal health and welfare.

W.A. Ranches will seek to serve the needs of the cattle industry through research and teaching in animal health and welfare unlike anywhere else in North America. Research will be specifically focused on animal health and welfare, within an agricultural context, adding to the growing body of knowledge that assists in the creation and maintenance of successful and healthy ranch practices.

Students, faculty and those from the broader community will be able to pioneer advancements that could significantly impact the ranching industry.

Principle 4  
Provide opportunities for youth education and community outreach.

The University is in the business of educating the young, and the not so young, as they pursue their life goals in whatever field they choose. W.A. Ranches provides an opportunity to develop an educational centre for youth communities resulting in a deeper understanding of ranching and the natural world.

The environment will be welcoming such that visitors and students alike experience both the daily activities of a working ranch, and the vibrant energy of a University. Interactive learning opportunities will be created that broaden the public’s understanding of the complex interconnected relationships between humans, animals, and the prairie ecosystem.
Principle 5
Support Entrepreneurship, innovation and implementation of new technologies on the ranch.

The techniques, approaches and technologies used to undertake ranching continually evolve. The university provides a unique bridge between new research and technology and the activities of a working ranch to support the evolving needs of sustainable and regenerative ranching operations and cattle research.

W.A. Ranches will serve to support a broad range of research opportunities, creating a virtuous cycle of scientific exploration and real-world implementation. The creation of this living laboratory/classroom will allow the rapid development of new ideas and techniques that will enhance our understanding of the interplay between natural and managed habitats in support of increased health, wellbeing, and productivity for animals and the environments they inhabit.
4 PLANNING FRAMEWORKS

4.1 DEVELOPED AREAS AND LAND USE TYPES

W.A. RANCHES LAND

The land that forms W.A. Ranches is not a contiguous area, but rather a collection of deeded parcels, previously owned by J.C. (Jack) Anderson and Wynne Chisholm, and gifted to the University of Calgary. The gifted lands also include a series of long-term leases used for grazing animals. As such, the Long Range Development Plan needs to work at both a micro (individual parcels) and macro (overall collection of parcels) scale. Each of the land parcels are shown on the Adjacent Deeded Lands and Grazing Leases map. All of the grazing lease areas highlighted in orange are to remain undeveloped. This means that there is no plan to place permanent structures on these parcels, rather they are to remain as areas of open pasture for grazing animals. These areas are included on the map for context purposes only, to provide an overall understanding of all the land constituting ‘W.A. Ranches’.

The areas highlighted in navy blue are those parcels that are deeded to/owned by the university. It is these areas that are the focus of proposed future development, as they already have permanent structures and in some cases, established settlements (homesteads, lodges, cabins). In order to enable a coherent understanding of the different parcels, they have been grouped according to the red boxes encircling different areas and labeled as Maps A, B, C, and D. Individual parcels are identified by name and given a numeric tag, under the legend running down the right side of the map. Subsequent illustrations provide a ‘zoomed in’ view of each of these areas.
DEVELOPMENT CATEGORIES

In order to assist with understanding the nature of activities, both current and future, proposed for the various parcels of land constituting W.A. Ranches, a series of categories has been developed, as illustrated on the legend opposite. As previously indicated, grazing land is to remain undeveloped, and is shown in orange on all subsequent maps. Deeded land, indicated in navy blue, has two categories and a number of subcategories within the Development Area category that pertain to both current and future proposed development. In addition to the land use categories, land ownership borders and roads are illustrated differently, to enable readers to differentiate between these important features.
4.2 MAP A

Map A illustrates the areas known as Cochrane East and Cochrane North. These terms were coined as the ranch developed over time, and new land and facilities were purchased. The vast majority of area in both these parcels is devoted to pasture, with small pockets of development nestled in specific spots, some clustered together for ranch workers accommodation and animal husbandry, other structures for food storage in isolated locations subsumed within pasture land. On the left side of the image is a series of photographs illustrating existing structures. On the right side, is a series of zoomed in views of specific areas. These views are the subject of the subsequent illustrations that depict in greater detail the current and proposed development land use.

EXISTING STRUCTURES

5. COCHRANE EAST

4. COCHRANE NORTH

EXAMINING EXISTING AREAS

ACADEMIC, RESEARCH + ADMINISTRATIVE

AGRICULTURAL SERVICE

FEED STORAGE

PARKING

PASTURE LAND

EXISTING ROAD

DEEMED LAND PROPERTY BORDER

GRASSING LEASE PROPERTY BORDER

EXISTING STRUCTURE / BUILDING
COCHRANE EAST DEVELOPMENT AREA

The northwest corner of Cochrane East currently houses a small farmhouse, some agriculture service buildings, and a few fixed storage structures. These facilities are to remain as they are central to the ongoing activities needed to maintain a functioning ranch. The intent is to augment the existing ranch related activities in this area, with an area for future bull research.

This area provides the opportunity to bring together several components of the vision and guiding principles. This development area will create an environment where multi-disciplinary academic research work can be undertaken by bringing-together industry partners and ranch staff to develop new and innovative approaches to ranching, supported by technology.

COCHRANE NORTH DEVELOPMENT AREAS 1 & 2

Development Area 1 for the Cochrane North parcel, is located along the eastern edge, close to the southwest corner of Cochrane East. The intent here is to augment the existing agriculture service structure with access to Lochend Road (a gravel track already exists), and an area for equine and multi-species research and teaching.

South of Development Area 1, accessed via Township Road 28-5, W5M, is Developed Area 2. An existing barn, with adjacent pens, currently occupies the site. An area for cattle research, parking, and a community outreach space is currently planned for development in this site. The intention is to create a facility that can be used by the community to both learn about the research and agricultural activities of the ranch, and a place for general events and gatherings.

By creating a safe, welcoming, and enjoyable experience for research and agricultural activities of the ranch for community members, guests, and visitors, this area will become a place where curiosity flourishes, where connections are made — with a deeper appreciation for this remarkable foothills environment — and a place for general events and gatherings.
Cochrane Home, as the name suggests, is the hub of current activity on W.A. Ranches. It is where the Ranch Office is located, and most of the residential accommodation for ranch workers. The map opposite shows where Cochrane Home and the grazing area known as ‘Anderson Lease’ are located, as well as three development areas within Cochrane Home. Photographs of the various existing structures are provided along the left edge of the map. Sheds, barns, and stables are all shown, along with the various types of residential accommodation.
COCHRANE HOME DEVELOPMENT AREAS 1, 2 & 3

Cochrane Home serves as the hub for the operations of the ranch. Development on this site will further strengthen and support the ranch’s operations as a cow-calf ranch through research and teaching opportunities that improve the quality of the ranch and the ranching industry overall.

Of the three development areas contained within Cochrane Home, additional development is only proposed to Developed Area 2. In order to facilitate research focused on the calving process, a new development area is proposed to house a calving facility and associated sleeping accommodations in the area close to the existing calving pens and shelters.

Researchers will be able to monitor nearby expectant cows, respond to their evolving needs, and participate in the safe delivery of calves. The outcomes of this work will help inform ranch practices that reduce unnecessary suffering, and improve outcomes for the calving process.

A small area of additional parking is also proposed adjacent to the existing ranch office, to deal with existing and future visitors to the facility. Developed Areas 1 and 3 are to remain as they currently are.
4.4 MAPS C & D

These areas are mostly comprised of grazing leases, with no existing or planned development. A small parcel of Map C, Larsen Ranch, currently houses a log cabin, a small shed, and a larger barn. These two maps illustrate land that is more geographically remote from the core facilities of the ranch, representing the most westerly (Map C) and southerly (Map D) portions of land. Currently cattle are moved between these parcels at various times of the year, using connecting trails, roads and pathways. With the exception of Larsen Ranch, the university does not plan to develop these lands beyond their current “Pasture Land” and “Grazing Land” usage.

MAP C - DEEDED LAND 2- JUMPING POUND RANCH

MAP D - DEEDED LAND 1 AND ADJACENT GRAZING LEASES IN CONTEXT
The remote nature of the Larsen Ranch parcel makes it an ideal location to study indigenous wildlife and animal species. It is here that a new area for wildlife and cattle research and teaching is proposed. A new area for parking to support this facility is also needed.

### 4.5 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

#### SAFETY

Safe ranch sites include:

- Direct exterior pathways with clear access points to buildings and exterior spaces
- Good sightlines across the site
- Reduced dead-ends and vegetation that obstructs sightlines
- Appropriate site lighting

#### SIGNAGE

Welcoming ranch sites include:

- Site entry signs welcoming visitors to the University of Calgary W.A. Ranches sites
- Building and site signage identifying public access areas when appropriate
- Hazardous areas signed
A.1 Definitions

Ownership Classifications

Deeded Land
Land that is owned by the university.

Grazing Lease
Land that the university has the right to graze animals on, through a lease arrangement.

Planning Elements

Development Areas
General areas where substantial development will take place. A development area can be comprised of more than one building. It can also include elements of open spaces, pedestrian and bicycle pathways, as well as links to public roadways, service roadways and service parking.

Pasture Land
Areas of deeded land that are dedicated to being maintained as areas for crop growth, or animal grazing.

Land Use Types

Academic, Research and Administrative
Development areas that support the university’s teaching, learning, research and administration activities. Areas may include some commercial activity such as food kiosks, but not as a primary function.

Residential
Development areas primarily used for the housing of ranch staff, students, faculty, guests, and research staff working and living on the ranch, either permanently, or for discrete periods of time. Some commercial activity that supports the campus and residents may be incorporated.

Agricultural Service Structure
Development areas housing barns, sheds, machine sheds, workshops, and other structures used for the support and maintenance of the ranch.

Feed Storage
Development areas housing physical structures used for the storage of animal food (grain bins, silos, etc).

Parking
Development areas used for parking vehicles for the daily operations of the ranch, academic staff, students, and visitors.

Appendices