

Smith Creek Area Structure Plan

Phase 4: Draft Policy Review

Report

Background

The Town of Canmore and Three Sisters Mountain Village (TSMV) continued to work together to create a development plan for the Smith Creek lands in TSMV, more commonly known as Sites 7, 8 & 9. The collaborative process involved addressing opportunities and challenges from a variety of perspectives by providing multiple occasions for the public to participate in the process. **Phase 1** was complete in July of 2015, **Phase 2** was complete in December of 2015, **Phase 3** was complete in June of 2016 and **Phase 4** was complete October of 2016.

This report deals specifically with the public engagement undertaken in **Phase 4** of the process to review the draft policy. The results of the engagement activities will inform the final policy document.

Summary of Phase 4 Activities

Phase 4 of the collaborative process focused on seeking feedback through focused discussions and refining the draft Concept Plan and policy for the Smith Creek ASP that was developed in **Phase 3** of the process.

Engagement Activities

Members of the Community Advisory Group continued to meet during this phase. The following engagement activities were held during **Phase 4** of the process:

- J One meeting with Parks Canada and Alberta Parks: Fencing – April 20
 - o Although not part of Phase 4, this meeting informed the EIS and is therefore included in the summary
- J One community meeting with wildlife groups: Wildlife mitigations – July 14
- J A meeting with Hubman Residents: Wildlife mitigations - July 19¹
- J One community meeting with Canmore Communities: Concept Plans – August 10
- J A meeting with Hubman Residents: Wildlife follow up – August 11
- J One community meeting with recreation groups: Recreation mitigations – August 13
- J One meeting with Dr. Adam Ford and Dr. Anthony Clevenger: Wildlife Mitigations – August 23
- J One Community Advisory Group meeting: Final meeting – August 30
- J One online session: Wildlife Mitigations – September 14

¹ Although Hubman meetings were not part of the Smith Creek ASP discussions, discussions around the wildlife corridor informed the EIS completed by Golder therefore a summary of these meetings has been provided in the following section.

-) Two Information Sessions: afternoon and evening sessions – October 18

Notes from these meetings can be found on the website: www.smithcreekcanmore.ca. A summary follows.

Generally, groups supported both the concept plan and the proposed mix of uses for Smith Creek. There was also support for the proposed trail systems, trail hierarchy and recreational amenities. Wildlife corridors were a large part of the discussion throughout the collaborative process for the Smith Creek ASP. Between animals selecting to be in the Town and people spending more time in wildlife corridors, there are more negative human-wildlife interactions affecting wildlife. As development increases, it is assumed that negative interactions will also increase if no mitigations are applied.

Discussions during **Phase 4** informed the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that is required for the ASP application. The EIS ultimately will examine opportunities to mitigate, reduce or eliminate the environmental impacts of development. Discussions focused on several mitigation strategies including attractant management, fencing, recreational alternatives, construction mitigations and sensory disturbance mitigations. Key concerns are described below.

-) Consensus was not reached on the proposed fence; some individuals thought a fence was a good idea while other individuals did not.
-) Conversations regarding the fence focused on the following:
 - o Why has the recommendation changed – hard vs soft edges?
 - o Who will pay for and maintain the fence in the long term?
 - o Will corridors be functional and maintain connectivity?
 - o Where has a fence been successful?
-) There were some groups and individuals that wanted no development as the only strategy for wildlife.

Supporting Reports:

In addition to the EIS, many other supporting studies were also refined during **Phase 4** including a Transportation Impact Assessment, Preliminary Steep Creek Hazard Report, Stormwater Management Plan, and a municipal Fiscal Impact Assessment.

Next Steps

Phase 5 of the process will begin when the application for the Smith Creek ASP is submitted to Town administration for formal review. Council will ultimately make the final decision on the Smith Creek ASP. The Council decision-making process includes three readings of a bylaw and a public hearing.

Summary Phase 4 Engagement

Summary of Fencing Meeting with Bow Valley Wildlife Managers: April 20, 2016²

The Project Team met with members of Alberta Environment and Parks (Wildlife Conflict Specialist, District Wildlife Biologist) and Parks Canada (Wildlife Conflict Specialist, Park Ecologist) to discuss several strategies for wildlife fencing. This meeting informed the initial first draft of the EIS. Topics discussed at the meeting included:

- J Wildlife conflict data in the Bow Valley and current strategies for reducing conflict, including attractant management, seasonal trail closures, education and enforcement. Areas of concern including highways, areas along the length of the corridors, and urban green spaces adjacent to corridors.
- J The effectiveness of past mitigation strategies was discussed, particularly the implementation of soft-edges (i.e. golf courses, parks).
- J The goal for wildlife fencing was discussed, for which species and what purpose. Different types of wildlife fencing exist, such as post and rail or wildlife exclusion. The effectiveness of these different types of fencing was discussed, and determined that wildlife exclusion fencing would likely be the most effective for this purpose over the other types to manage the species that are the most problematic in human-wildlife conflicts.
- J The effectiveness of wildlife exclusion fencing along the Trans-Canada Highway and other highways in the National Parks, surrounding the Lake Louise Campground, and adjacent to residential in Jackson, Wyoming and the lessons learned over the past 20 years were discussed. It was discussed that If wildlife exclusion fence is recommended as a mitigation strategy:
 - o The need for a holistic approach with a fence being only one of the mitigations; others being attractant management, enforcement and education.
 - o Design, maintenance and lifespan of the fence are important considerations.
 - Approximately 2.5 m high mesh apron at a 45-degree angle
 - Opening management is critical and consideration should be given to electromats, cattleguards, and swing gates or jump outs. Current testing is on-going for jump-out and electromat design, as effectiveness is not yet determined.
 - In addition, the fence should be fully enclosed so that animals do not become trapped
 - o The location of the fence is important. It should be located on public lands so that it is maintained properly and will function as designed. The opportunity for the fence to be located on MR would also allow for a trail system reducing the likelihood that people will breach the fence) and to provide maintenance access.

² Although this meeting occurred during Phase 3, the discussions informed refining of the EIS and is therefore included in the Phase 4 summary.

- The fence must have gated openings to trails that bisect the corridor to connect people to trails above the wildlife corridor.
- The fence must be well maintained to be effective.
-)] The goal of fencing should be to exclude wildlife from development areas. The fence will not keep all animals out but if combined with attractant management, it can be effective.
-)] The fence will also act as a visual cue for people, clearly delineating the wildlife corridor boundary.

Summary of the Wildlife Group Meeting: July 14, 2016

The Project Team met with Wildlife groups on July 14 to review the concept plan for Smith Creek and seek feedback on the wildlife mitigation strategies proposed. The original Human Use Management Review (HUMR) list was used to inform the invitation list. Members of Y2Y, WildSmart, the Town's Environmental Advisory and Review Committee (EARC), Biosphere Institute, and individuals with a wildlife background or interest attended the meeting. A member of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) was also present.

An overview of the Smith Creek collaborative process as well as the role of the CAG was provided at the meeting. Participants were provided with an overview of the proposed development within the Smith Creek ASP. The proposed amendments to the Resort Centre ASP were introduced by QPD as a separate application from the Smith Creek collaborative process. The discussion at this meeting focused on existing corridor conditions, negative human/wildlife interactions and wildlife mitigation strategies.

-)] Wildlife corridors functionality including corridor widths, pinch points and the 25-degree slope line and corridor width.
-)] The potential to decrease negative human/wildlife interactions through a holistic mitigation strategy including fencing, education, construction mitigations, attractant management (appropriate plantings and enforcement) and providing clear alternatives for people to recreate outside the corridors including designated trails through the corridor.

Participants were interested in examples of where fencing had worked in other jurisdictions, the potential issues associated with a fence including intrusions and the options for animals caught on the wrong side of the fence, the role of the developer and the Town in the construction and maintenance of the fence, and the extent of fencing within Smith Creek, Resort Centre and geographic features such as creeks and the Bow River.

There was general support for the mitigation strategies except Y2Y who reiterated their position on the width of the corridor, the connectivity of the corridor beyond the valley and the functionality of the fence particularly jump outs/swing gates.

Notes from this meeting can be found on the website: www.smithcreekcanmore.ca.

Summary of the Canmore Communities Meeting: August 10, 2016

The Project Team met with a few Canmore community service groups to review the concept plan for Smith Creek and seek feedback on several topics related to quality of life in Canmore including the need for Affordable Housing. Members of the Town Arts and Events and the Immigration partnership as well as a member of the CAG were present.

An overview of the Smith Creek collaborative process as well as the role of the CAG were provided at the meeting. Participants were also provided with an overview of the proposed development within the Smith Creek ASP. The proposed amendments to the Resort Centre ASP were introduced by QPD as a separate application from the Smith Creek collaborative process. The discussion at this meeting focused on how development in the proposed Smith Creek area could further support the following:

-) The need for additional recreation opportunities and amenities for residents of Canmore.
-) The desire for public art and more studio spaces within the Town.
-) The concerns over transportation in particular transit options.
-) The need for more affordable housing (employee housing, PAH, entry level housing, secondary suites and the "tiny" home movement).
-) The desire for more childcare opportunities to keep young families in the community.
-) The desire for greater diversity in the community and an ability to meet the needs of the growing immigrant populations.
-) The desire for greater "adult" education opportunities within the Town.

Notes from this meeting can be found on the website: www.smithcreekcanmore.ca.

Summary of the Recreation Meeting: August 13, 2016

The Project Team met with recreation groups to review the concept plan for Smith Creek and seek feedback on the proposed recreation strategies within Smith Creek area. Members from Canmore Cycling Culture, Friends of Kananaskis, At Your Bark and Call and a CAG member were present.

An overview of the Smith Creek collaborative process as well as the role of the CAG were provided at the meeting. Participants were also provided with an overview of the proposed development within the Smith Creek ASP. The proposed amendments to the Resort Centre ASP were introduced by QPD as a separate application from the Smith Creek collaborative process. The discussion at this meeting focused on how development in the proposed Smith Creek area could further support the recreational opportunities within and outside the Canmore area and work to reduce the negative human/wildlife interactions. The following is a summary of the discussion.

-) The density proposed within both the Smith Creek ASP and the overall projected population of the Bow Valley.
-) The significant and extensive use of the corridors for recreational purposes resulting in negative human/wildlife interactions and in some cases animal mortality.

- Discussed the concerns associated with the expansion of the development towards Deadman's Flats and the likelihood of more illegal trails. For example, the Tipple Valley corridor is already showing significant human use.
-)] The types of trails proposed within the Smith Creek area should be well thought out and include designated trails within the developments; paved, multi-use and graveled trail beds, with clear but limited access points through the corridor to the trail system above the wildlife corridor.
-)] The types of trails proposed within the Resort Centre area should be more urban, walkable and pedestrian focused and more similar in nature to Whistler but ultimately needed to be connected to the Smith Creek ASP. Cycle trails should connect the TSMV development areas.
-)] The clustering of recreational amenities in both development areas and include amenities such as playgrounds, trailheads, washrooms and picnic tables. Both should also have dog parks and off-leash areas.
-)] The opportunities for unique recreational amenities such as ropes courses, indoor/outdoor terrain parks, and larger fields for soccer, baseball, etc. should be provided. These types of recreational amenities will ensure that people feel more connected to TSMV.

Notes from this meeting can be found on the website: www.smithcreekcanmore.ca.

Summary of Hubman Landing Resident Meetings:

QuantumPlace Developments met with residents of Hubman Landing five times over the course of Phase 4 engagement. Although the Resort Centre was not officially part of the Collaborative Process established for the Smith Creek ASP, there are close connections between the two areas. Smith Creek was discussed during these meetings. A summary of the meetings dates where Smith Creek was discussed are as follows.

-)] Review of Concept Plan and proposed ASP Amendments: June 20.
-)] Wildlife Mitigation Strategies: July 19
-)] Wildlife Follow Up: August 11

Notes from these meetings can be found on the website: www.smithcreekcanmore.ca.

Summary of meeting with Dr. Adam Ford and Dr. Anthony Clevenger: Wildlife Mitigations – August 23, 2016

The Project Team met with Dr. Adam Ford and Dr. Anthony Clevenger, two well known wildlife experts familiar with the Bow Valley. The Project Team provided an overview of the Smith Creek ASP as well as the concerns raised by wildlife groups specifically Y2Y. The Resort Centre was also discussed. The discussion focussed on wildlife considerations and proposed mitigation strategies outlined in the draft EIS being prepared by Golder. The following is a summary of the discussion.

-)] EIS is proposing a fence, education, enforcement, attractant management, designated people trails bisecting the corridor and off-leash dog parks.

- J Options for fencing were discussed and include a permeable fence or an exclusionary fence. The latter is preferred but the fence needs to be completely enclosed. Discussed fencing in detail, specifically that it is an effective method to funnel wildlife to crossing structures and, when combined with housing setbacks and vegetation management in the developed areas, it can reduce sensory disturbance.
- J Corridor alignment and the history of the decisions regarding the alignment.
- J The concern for movement is more in the across valley direction; therefore, the parkway will negatively affect movement if the road bisects the corridor. Options were discussed.
- J The proposed additional underpass was discussed and the EIS guidelines for design at a later stage in development. The ideal is to have a single crossing for the parkway and all trails on the Stewart Creek Across Valley Corridor.
- J Development on the unfinished golf course would eliminate the grazing habitat for elk. Initiatives to enhance habitat in the Along Valley Corridor would also assist in creating greater movement.

Notes from this meeting can be found on the website: www.smithcreekcanmore.ca.

Summary of the Community Advisory Group Meeting: August 30, 2016

A review of all the feedback received over the summer months was provided and a discussion occurred. CAG members were pleased with the amount of engagement that had occurred over the summer months. They noted the following key points:

- J The discussion around wildlife is a difficult one as it is emotionally driven and has been for many, many years.
- J While the collaborative process has maintained a high level of engagement and transparency and significant progress was made in creating a better understanding of the issues and concerns related to wildlife, there is still a diversity of opinions on this topic; some based in fact and some not.
- J The conversations around the Smith Creek proposal were somewhat sidelined by the discussions around wildlife. This was one of the frustrations expressed by some CAG members.
- J CAG members felt that a diversity of stakeholders were engaged throughout the process.
- J QPD indicated that follow-up meetings will occur with certain groups when more detailed planning is initiated.

Notes from this meeting can be found on the website: www.smithcreekcanmore.ca.

Summary of the Online Session for Wildlife: September 14, 2016

Eighty people registered for the online forum and fifty-two signed in and participated. An overview of the collaborative process as well as the role of the CAG was provided during the

online session. Participants were also provided with an overview of the proposed development within the Smith Creek ASP. The proposed amendments to the Resort Centre ASP were introduced by QPD as a separate application from the Smith Creek collaborative process.

The focus of the online discussion was on topics ranging from the mix of uses and proposed density to existing wildlife corridor conditions, negative human/wildlife interactions and wildlife mitigation strategies to process and decision making. A summary of the questions and concerns follows:

- J The collaborative process and mechanisms for decision-making.
- J Proposed density for both ASPs within the context of the NRCB decision.
- J Questions related to the need for growth in Canmore and the ultimate population growth numbers.
- J Concerns related to the functionality of the current wildlife corridors including corridor widths, pinch points and the 25-degree slope line and corridor width.
- J Concerns with an increase in negative human/wildlife interactions related to growth and a concern regarding projected future numbers.
- J Concerns with the fencing mitigation strategy including impacts on wildlife, impacts on the connectivity of the Bow Valley wildlife corridors, costs associated with construction and maintenance of the fence, proof of concept and where this has been successful in highly populated areas and a general concern about what has changed and why fencing is being suggested.

The Team answered over 80 questions during the 2.5-hour session. The video, summary notes and FAQ's from this meeting can be found on the website: www.smithcreekcanmore.ca and www.resortcentrecanmore.ca. In addition, a FAQ document can be found at: [http://resortcentrecanmore.ca/files/7314/7510/3089/092816 -
Online Community Conversation QA-FINAL.pdf](http://resortcentrecanmore.ca/files/7314/7510/3089/092816-_Online_Community_Conversation_QA-FINAL.pdf)

Summary of the Information Sessions: October 18, 2016

The Smith Creek ASP information sessions was held on October 18, 2016 at the Coast Canmore Hotel and Conference Centre. Approximately 70 people attended the sessions. The first session was held between 1:00 and 4:00 PM and the second was held between 7:00 and 9:00 PM. The same information was presented for each session. The sessions were a drop-in format where attendees looked through display boards.

QPD also held an information session for the Resort Centre ASP amendments at the same time and the ballroom at the Coast was divided by a wall partition to create a clear delineation between the two projects.

In addition to the Smith Creek Project Team, there were also representatives from Golder Associates and MMM to answer questions related to wildlife, undermining and site servicing.

Comments and Feedback

- J Overall, the comments and feedback presented at the open house were very similar to the messages that we have been hearing at previous engagement sessions. In general,

the most frequent comments and areas of concern were related to wildlife and an overall adverse reaction to new development.

- J Comments on the general development included:
 - o Need for affordable housing.
 - o Would like the golf course to remain a golf course (Resort Centre).
 - o Concern related to property values due to fence not allowing wildlife to access their properties.
- J Comments related to wildlife included:
 - o Concern that higher density development in proximity to the wildlife corridor would result in more negative human-wildlife interactions and increase human use in the wildlife corridor.
 - o Who will pay to implement and maintain the fence?
 - o The opinion that wildlife in one's backyard is desirable, and the fence will limit that opportunity.
- J Comments related to engineering and servicing:
 - o Concern about the increased population and the impact that would have on servicing infrastructure and traffic.
 - o People do not want a repeat of the Stewart Creek Phase 3 grading.

Conclusion and Next Steps:

The Project Team has engaged in a significant number of external conversations, group meetings, open houses, online sessions, workshops, and information sessions. The input and feedback from these engagement sessions has informed the development of the proposed Smith Creek Area Structure Plan and significantly shaped both the concept plan and policy development.

QPD, on behalf of TSMV, will now complete the final ASP document and all application submission materials for the Town to review for approval.