

Mining the Future A Vision for Canmore

Approved by Council (Resolution #457-2006) on October 17, 2006

Executive Summary



*"The future is not some place we are going, but one we are creating.
The paths to it are not found but made, and the activity of making them
changes both the maker and the destination."*

~ John Schaar



Setting the stage

A vision is a rich, clear and inspiring picture of some aspect of the world – of our own life or of our family, company, town or country – at a time in the future. It expresses our *present imagining of what the future could be for us*. In the autumn of 2005, Canmore's Mayor and Council asked the community to create a vision for the future of the town. At the heart of the project – named *Mining the Future* – lay the question: "What kind of community can we as citizens imagine Canmore becoming in the years ahead?"

The Canmore Vision was created from the ground up, and as such is much more than the Vision Statement itself. The 500-plus Mining the Future participants identified key community **values**, community **principles** that guide our actions as Canmorites, **goals** that we will need to reach to become the community we have imagined, and **criteria** to help us make the decisions that will help us achieve our goals. Together, the values, principles, goals and criteria constitute the Canmore Vision. The Vision Statement, which at best expresses the intent of the Vision, is only the peak of the mountain; the Vision's full value lies in what was learned along the climb.

How we went about it

Mining the Future has been an exemplary demonstration of grass-roots democracy. Involving over 400 citizens participating either as individuals or as members of 40-plus volunteer neighbourhood and community groups, the visioning process proceeded through multiple rounds of Café discussions and weekend work parties. Encompassing ten months' effort, Mining the Future involved four broad steps:

1. Participants first identified local, national, and international forces that might affect Canmore's future.
2. On the basis of those forces, they then developed four possible scenarios for Canmore's future, each of which presented a distinct world in which we might someday live and work.
3. In turn, the scenarios provided the grounding for robust, often challenging, and ultimately rewarding discussions about what kind of future we as Canmorites want, and how we can move towards that future. Questions asked and answered included: "What values and principles do we share as citizens that will help us create the future we want?" "What goals will guide us towards that future?" And, "What decision-making criteria do we need in order to reach our goals?"
4. Finally, participants sought to define the spirit of the Canmore they envisioned, distilling 10 months' effort into an overarching Vision Statement.

This document

Although this document has been prepared for presentation to Council by the Mining the Future team leaders, the real authors are the citizen participants of the process. This is their – our! – voice. Each part of Vision – Statement, Principles, Goals and Criteria – is presented in turn. The document concludes with a section on "Realizing the Vision," and an appendix of several definitions that should be helpful in interpreting the Vision.

Vision Statement

As citizens of Canmore, we are proud of our community's mining and mountain heritage, of the inspiring mountain landscape and the rich natural environment we share with species that define the Canadian West and wilderness, of the astonishing range of skills and talents demonstrated by our residents, of our exceptional commitment to the well-being of others in the community, and of our collective effort to be leaders in finding solutions to the challenges that confront our own and other mountain communities.

Understanding where we have come from, and what we value today, we imagine a future in which Canmore is:

- An accessible, friendly, inclusive and closely-knit community with a small town feel and a distinct identity anchored in its mountain surroundings and its mining past;
- A community populated by a wide range of individuals and families from different backgrounds and of different ages, interests, values, skills and economic means;
- A community that supports its diverse population with affordable housing, a strong and varied economy, a healthy environment, a full array of social services, abundant open space and ample opportunities for recreation and artistic expression;
- A community that acknowledges and works within the limits imposed by its geography and ecology, and that uses the best the world has to offer in designing a built environment that respects and is worthy of its natural environment;
- A community that has become a leader in integrating its social, economic and environmental activities in ways that ensure its future generations will enjoy the same opportunities and quality of life as its current generations.

The Canmore of the future is a prosperous, vital, and vibrant community. It's great strength is its varied, resourceful, and engaged citizens, who thrive together on the strength of the community's long-term commitment to the diversity of its people and the health of the mountain landscape that shapes and sustains it.

Values

As citizens of Canmore, we share three community values that are so widely-held as to constitute the foundation of Canmore's civil society. They represent our highest aspirations as citizens, and should be acknowledged and respected as such. They should inform all of our thinking about the future, and all of our actions as we move towards that future.

As citizens of Canmore, we aspire to a future that fully expresses our community's foundational values. The values are:

1. **Sustainability**, which means that as a community we integrate our social, economic and environmental activities in ways that will enable us to meet the needs of the current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
2. **Diversity**, which means managing our community in ways that attract, include, keep, and celebrate a wide range of people, perspectives, and lifestyles.
3. **Connectedness**, which means managing our community in ways that foster a shared sense of belonging among all citizens. A sense of belonging allows individuals to take responsibility for themselves while bearing in mind they are part of a larger community.

Guiding Principles

Aside from our foundational values, we as Canmore citizens share five guiding principles – important community ideals that constitute the pillars of the vision and that will steer us toward the future we seek.

As citizens of Canmore we aspire to a future that retains and builds on our core guiding principles. They are:

1. **Our identity.** We recognize ourselves to be:
 - Healthy, active people who share a passion for mountain culture, environment, aesthetics, and recreation;
 - Highly skilled people with a diversity of talents who are involved personally and professionally in our community and the world-at-large;
 - People who have chosen to live here, who are able to reflect on who they are and why they live here, and who are committed to continually renewing their relationship with each other, the community, and the mountain landscape; and
 - People who excel in all aspects of life, but particularly so in sports, the arts, and wellbeing.

2. **Economic sustainability.** We acknowledge the importance of a strong economy to our overall wellbeing, and how important it is that our economy remains viable over time. At present, we see ourselves primarily as a successful tourism community. To achieve the strong, resilient economy we believe necessary for future success, we will need to build on the tourism base to create a balanced economy that draws from many sources, including knowledge-based industry, entrepreneurship, retirement and investment income, wellness and mountain lifestyle. Economic sustainability requires a diversity of income sources and the participation a diverse workforce – one with a range of skills, ages, means and abilities – that is supported by the community over time.
3. **Social fabric.** We are proud of our history as a close-knit, supportive and caring community, and we envision a future in which Canmore's social fabric remains as tightly woven as in the past. We believe that embracing diversity, and managing our community in ways that support diversity, is the means to creating and maintaining a strong social fabric. To maintain that fabric's strength – woven from the warp and weft of different people of all ages and backgrounds, family make-up, income levels, values, and interests – we will need to not only support current practices and policies that keep people here who are already in the community, but discover and implement new practices and policies as well.
4. **Environmental stewardship.** We recognize that Canmore is both geographically bounded and ecologically significant. Further, we acknowledge that Canmore is part of a wider ecosystem and that we as human residents share the valley with many other species of plants and animals. Accordingly, we acknowledge that our geography and ecology impose limits that cannot be ignored. Environmental stewardship means that we ensure our mountain ecosystems remain healthy over time, and that we work towards our common future without squandering either our cultural or natural capital. It requires the demonstration of individual and community responsibility towards the natural environment.
5. **Civic engagement and leadership.** We note the community's history of strong citizen engagement in important civic issues. The future we envision builds on that engagement, with an expanded voice for citizens in making key decisions. A variety of new forums that support meaningful community dialogue, information sharing, and informed deliberation will be required to make decisions that are consistent with the Vision. Continued and expanded citizen engagement will require visionary leadership from both our elected officials and our individual residents.

Goals and Decision-making Criteria

To achieve our Vision, we need both goals and decision-making criteria that are consistent with our values and guiding principles. The following two tables articulate those goals and criteria. The top of each table reminds us of Canmore's foundational values. Below, the left hand column provides the rationale for the goals and criteria, and the other columns provide the specific goals and criteria linked to the five guiding principles. Although the goals and criteria are numbered, the numbers do not imply any particular priority or ranking.

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES FOR CANMORE

SUSTAINABILITY: . . . integrating our social, economic and environmental activities in ways that will enable us to meet the needs of the current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

DIVERSITY: . . . managing our community in ways that attract, include, keep, and celebrate a wide range of people, perspectives, and lifestyles.

CONNECTEDNESS: . . . managing our community in ways that foster a shared sense of belonging among all citizens.

	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Economic Sustainability</i>	<i>Social Fabric</i>	<i>Environmental Stewardship</i>	<i>Civic Engagement And Leadership</i>
<p>GOALS</p> <p>As citizens of Canmore, we believe the following goals must be actively and tirelessly pursued if we are to realize our Vision. As a community, we must:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand, cherish and maintain the diverse nature of Canmore's landscape, heritage and people 2. Recognize that our sense of community, including both ourselves and those who visit us, is the core of our identity 3. Acknowledge that our identity includes regional and international tourism, recreation and mountain lifestyles, and a focus on wellness and excellence in sport 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build a strong, vibrant and diversified local economy and business base that is resilient to changes in any one sector 2. Develop and implement a clear marketing plan based on Canmore's strengths and that has positive consequences for the social fabric 3. Blend and integrate the needs of Canmore's local population with the needs of its visitors and those who serve them 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge and strengthen our social connections and manage the pressure that will be placed on them over time 2. Recognize and strengthen Canmore as a diverse, inclusive community, integrating residents of all ages, income levels and skills 3. Meet the needs and aspirations of permanent residents while integrating new full and part time residents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the Bow Valley ecosystem 2. Encourage and support programs and activities intended to create an educated and engaged public that embraces environmental stewardship 3. Define and promote the entire spectrum of cultural and ecological values associated with our mountain landscape 4. Acknowledge and respect the needs of both humans and wildlife regarding the use of the natural landscape 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and refine ways for the citizens of Canmore to engage in public policy processes that move well beyond open houses and public hearings 2. Nurture a well informed and broad-based electorate that is empowered to vote, to be involved in community decisions, and to make a positive contribution to the community 3. Recognize and utilize the diverse range of talents and perspectives of citizens

	<p>4. Create a balanced relationship between the Canmore that serves tourists and the Canmore that serves a large local, non-tourist population</p> <p>5. Recognize and redefine our connection and working relationships with the nearby communities of Banff, Exshaw, Lake Louise, Morley, Calgary</p> <p>6. Retain Canmore's small town character – open, friendly, easily accessible – while developing its global connections</p> <p>7. Preserve and celebrate our mountain heritage</p> <p>8. Develop excellence in arts and culture, environmental stewardship and wellness</p>	<p>4. Develop a large base of staff who are committed to local businesses, and provide diverse, permanent employment opportunities for locals</p> <p>5. Research and distribute information regarding current and emerging economic drivers, including tourism, knowledge-based work, second-home ownership, retirement and investment income, entrepreneurship, wellness, and lifestyle</p>	<p>4. Ensure all citizens have access to basic levels of safe, secure, affordable and appropriate shelter</p> <p>5. Encourage and support a broad range of community activities and programs</p> <p>6. Support the growing community interest in wellness, which encourages personal responsibility and community engagement</p>	<p>5. Acknowledge there are geographic and ecological limits in the Bow Valley, and that the reality of limits must be considered in discussions regarding continued use of the landscape by people and other species</p> <p>6. Connect Canmore's role as a gateway community to Provincial and National Parks to the regional ecosystem; maintain regional connectivity of the surrounding landscape</p> <p>7. Exercise leadership in environmental excellence through innovation and creativity.</p>	<p>4. Encourage and support policies, programs, and activities that will increase Canmore's leadership capacity and the capacity of all citizens to exercise civic responsibility</p> <p>5. Revise the Town's of Canmore decision making structures to reflect significantly increased and long-term citizen engagement</p> <p>6. Increase the capacity for, and clarity of, formal community communications</p> <p>7. Monitor and evaluate the Town of Canmore's decisions to ensure the community's long-term vision is upheld over time.</p>
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	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Economic Sustainability</i>	<i>Social Fabric</i>	<i>Environmental Stewardship</i>	<i>Civic Engagement And Leadership</i>
<p>CRITERIA</p> <p>Decisions consistent with the following criteria will help us move toward achieving our goals. Accordingly, will the decision to be made. . .</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be consistent with, and strengthen the value of Canmore's identity 2. Strengthen our connectedness by creating means to create a strong sense of belonging 3. Demonstrate the relationship between the natural landscape and our identity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support local businesses 2. Encourage economic diversity 3. Increase our capacity to attract new business that will enhance and complement the tourism industry through policies of the Town 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contribute to a dynamic, well-stratified demographic profile 2. Provide basic social services for all citizens 3. Ensure cooperation by community services, education and health authorities, and faith communities 4. Ensure access to support and services within the community for people with special needs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance community understanding of the responsibilities and trade-offs involved with living with wildlife in the Bow Valley 2. Provide opportunities for individuals to participate responsibly in wilderness recreational activities 3. Use the precautionary principle as defined below 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop pro-active planning that involves citizens and integrates community input into decision making 2. Use a variety of ways to ensure citizen engagement 3. Clearly communicate to the community at large and by 1 and 2 above foster a sense of trust and ownership in civic engagement processes

	<p>4. Market and promote our identity in a way that supports and enhances our vision</p> <p>5. Communicate Canmore's identity to residents, newcomers and visitors</p>	<p>4. Promote entrepreneurial networking among business professionals, including self-employed residents</p> <p>5. Integrate all of our values and guiding principles into our economic decision making</p>	<p>5. Provide a mix of affordable housing options for all who require it</p> <p>6. Ensure the design of physical facilities and activities that encourage people to come together (pedestrian areas, trails, meeting places in new developments)</p>	<p>4. Be made with community collaboration on environmental issues</p> <p>5. Define the environmental and social impacts on an economic endeavour</p> <p>6. Maintain regional wildlife connectivity, ecological integrity and biodiversity (do no harm)</p>	<p>4. Continue to build capacity for continuing dialogue for formal and informal community leaders</p>
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REALIZING THE VISION

The Mining the Future Vision provides a broad, ambitious and comprehensive overview of the future we desire as Canmore citizens. While we understand that the changes inherent in the Vision will not occur all at once, but rather incrementally over time, there is nonetheless a clear, insistent expectation that the Vision will be reflected in decisions that are made in the future. . . and that the future starts today.

This section is not an implementation plan. By “realizing the Vision” we mean using the Vision’s foundational values and guiding principles to think about the decisions we make in the community. The following points constitute findings and suggestions from the Mining the Future process that may add some clarity to the task of the putting the values and principles to work.

A. Key Findings

A number of insights cut across the Mining the Future discussions so consistently that they merit special mention. They are:

- **Connectedness.** Social cohesion or connectedness emerged as a critical foundational value – and perhaps *the foremost* foundational value of the Vision. As a whole, the community is not willing to sacrifice social cohesion for other goals.
- **Civic Engagement.** Similarly, civic engagement and leadership emerged as a critical guiding principle. We believe the Mining the Future process has altered the expectation of how civic engagement should be undertaken. Future public engagement processes need to reflect a new approach to civil dialogue, one characterized by town-hall style community information-sharing, the inclusion of the widest possible number of voices, and more participatory decision-making.
- **Physical Character.** Physical character has two elements. The first is the aesthetics of buildings, streets and spaces. Height limits and common exterior looks are part of that aesthetics. The second is the social influence of architecture and spatial design. A key consideration that emerged in discussing community cohesion was the need to design meeting places. The idea is that planning and architecture can create places of convergence – for example, parks, squares, pedestrian-only streets or lanes, and coffee shops – where people come together. This design element, along with the architectural and aesthetic standards, should be considered in the planning process. One of the processes’ persistent themes was that innovative, world class design will be necessary if Canmore is to accommodate its anticipated growth and still meet the expectations of its citizens as to the “highly liveable” community described in the Vision.

B. Applying the Values.

Decision making becomes easier when we know the values that are in the hearts of Canmore’s citizens. On the basis of the Mining the Future process, there is no evidence that a business-as-usual approach towards dealing with the future will sustain the qualities that residents value about Canmore. Local government is such a complex, time-consuming job that officials alone cannot lead such an

effort. The private sector has shown that, in a complex, rapidly-changing environment, it is possible to direct incremental change in a way that demonstrably improves a large and complex entity (such as Canmore).

By way of example, the following table suggests some ways in which the foundational values can act as a guiding force in community decision making.

Foundational values for Canmore	Move Canmore from . . .	To a Canmore that . . .
Diversity	<p>engaging the “usual suspects” in traditional hearings</p> <p>relying on tourism as the foundation of the economy</p> <p>a community that is struggling to keep young families</p>	<p>hears all voices in a variety of formats and venues and moves towards consensus</p> <p>works towards a variety of different economic activities through policies and practices</p> <p>has enough stock of affordable housing to accommodate those in need</p>
Sustainability	<p>a place where sustainability is a little understood idea</p> <p>a rapidly growing community</p> <p>thinking about limits occasionally or only in terms of footprint of the town</p>	<p>clearly understands the meaning of sustainability and the trade offs it requires</p> <p>uses caution to ensure the pace of growth is manageable</p> <p>understands limits on all fronts – environmental, social and economic</p>
Connectedness	<p>a community that differentiates between part- and full- time residents</p> <p>a community that is socially fragmented by resident status, neighbourhood, employment, income, etc.</p> <p>a community divided by geography and infrastructure (i.e., the river and transportation corridor)</p>	<p>actively welcomes residents of all types</p> <p>is connected through integrated community associations and networks</p> <p>is easily connected geographically through pathways, buses and architecture</p>

C. Continuing the Dialogue.

The type of conversations and dialogue that occurred during Mining the Future were acknowledged by many – and perhaps most – participants to offer a new, exciting, and very productive way to engage in civic discourse. Because of the results – which in some instances included traditional adversaries sitting down to share information, seek common ground based in common values, and work together to arrive at “common good” solutions – there is an expectation that those types of conversations will continue into the future.

As one way to keep the process of community dialogue moving ahead, we have proposed the creation of an oversight group whom we are calling the *Vision Keepers*. While a full set of terms of reference for this group needs to be developed in the implementation phase of Mining the Future, the role of the Vision Keepers would be to ensure that dialogue and conversations continue, to create opportunities for their continuance, and to provide insight for Mayor and Council as to the integration of decisions and Canmore’s Vision.

As Canmore has become a larger and more complex community – with more people, more money, more interests – it has become increasingly difficult for an individual, or even a group of individuals, to be able to significantly affect a community just by his or her own personal efforts. While it cuts against the “rugged individualism” character/tradition of the West to work in groups (and while it cuts even more sharply to bring groups together into coalitions), the complex nature of opportunities and challenges have made it exceptionally difficult for lone individuals or lone groups to effect meaningful change. We see the Vision Keepers, in conjunction with the Mining the Future conversational forms, to be a critical force in keeping the Vision alive and moving it forward.

D. Vision Accountability and Implementation Monitoring

From Mining the Future’s public launch at the Civic Centre in the fall of 2005 to the final Canmore Café in the late spring of 2006, participants expressed a consistent and abiding concern regarding: 1) Vision accountability; and 2) the monitoring of its implementation. As a result, elements of accountability and monitoring are common to all of the guiding principles: Identity; Economic Sustainability; Social Fabric; Environmental Stewardship; and Civic Engagement and Leadership. Below is a possible framework for addressing Vision accountability and monitoring.

1. Identify the criteria (performance measures, metrics) that need to be used to measure progress, or the lack thereof, for each guiding principle.
2. Devise specific rating systems/genuine progress indicators for each principle.
3. Monitor on a regular basis.
4. Integrate existing monitoring mechanisms into a complete set for each principle.
5. Develop the monitoring and accountability metrics and processes during implementation of the vision using community input, web forums, advertising and community café conversations.
6. Work through formal or informal decision-making processes to ensure that there are links between the criteria and goals within each principle and links that integrate all the principles and values together.

Appendix: Definitions

Citizens of Canmore: For the purposes of this document – and to begin to create a language of cohesion in Canmore – the term “citizen” does not differentiate between full and part time residents.

Ecological Integrity: Ecological integrity is the condition in which all of Nature’s structures and processes continue to function at a high level, and in which all currently existing plant and animal species persist in viable populations. The needs and aspirations of the human population are included as a component of the Bow Valley ecosystem.

Economic Sustainability: Economic sustainability means economic activity that contributes to a community’s quality of life without compromising the natural environment. An economically sustainable community:

- provides readily-accessible and diverse employment opportunities that offer meaningful work at reasonable rates of pay, and that build upon skills and knowledge present in the community;
- has services and supports in place that can provide economic security in the event of disability or disease; and
- makes optimum use of renewable resources and full use of the best available technology, materials, and design.

Liveable Community: A liveable community is an attractive, accessible, pedestrian-oriented community that supports the needs of a diverse population and labour force with quality affordable housing, ample open spaces, convenient transportation alternatives, social services, a strong economy, healthy environment, and a distinct sense of identity.

Precautionary Principle: The idea that if the consequences of an action are unknown, but are judged to have some potential for major or irreversible negative consequences, then it is best to avoid taking that action. In practice the principle is most often applied in the context of the impact of human society or new [technology](#) on an [ecosystem](#), as the environment is a [complex system](#) where the consequences of some kinds of actions can be unpredictable.