

Smith Creek and Resort Centre Online Community Conversation

Project Overview and Wildlife-Human Interactions

TELUS Conference Centre
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Support

Lori Van Roojen – Facilitator

Kyle Knopff – Golder Associates

Tracy Woitenko – Town of Canmore

Jessica Karpat – QPD

Kent McDougall – QPD

Jenn Giesbrecht – QPD

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Welcome and Introductions

- The Facilitator provided an overview of the focus for the meeting: the wildlife mitigations proposed for the Smith Creek ASP and the Resort Centre ASP amendments.
- An overview was provided for those new residents attending the meeting.
- Tracy Woitenko from the Town of Canmore provided an overview of the collaborative process used to develop the ASP for Smith Creek, as well as a brief history of the plan area. She also invited attendees to participate in future information sessions on September 27, 2016 at the Canmore Coast Hotel.

Planning Overview

- Kent McDougall from QuantumPlace Developments (QPD) provided an overview of the anticipate form and potential densities in Resort Centre and Smith Creek.
- These included:
 - The residential development will consist of three distinct but integrated neighbourhoods, connected by a network of roads and trails as one cohesive community. These residences will include a combination of rental apartments, condos, townhomes, and single family homes – which means that making a home at TMSV will be accessible to a broader, more diverse range of people and families. The flagship amenity in the Resort Centre will be an imaginative destination spa and wellness clinic.

- The boundary of the Resort Centre Area Structure Plan is within the east side of the Town of Canmore on the westerly portion of the Three Sisters Mountain Village growth area. **The Plan area comprises approximately 303 hectares (750 acres) of land.**
- ASP allocates between **43 - 52 hectares (105 - 130 acres)** of land for a resort core and associated resort expansion area,
- ASP allocates approximately **14 - 21 hectares (35 - 52 acres)** of land for Resort Accommodation uses in Resort Accommodation Area A. Between 175 and 350 Resort Accommodation units may be provided here.

Land Use Areas	Area Range	ASP Unit	Min Density (u/ac)	Mid Density (u/ac)	Max Density (u/ac)
Resort Core & Expansion Area	43 to 52 ha (105 to 130 ac)	650-1,350	6.0	8.0	10.0
Resort Accommodation Area A	14 to 21 ha (35 to 52 ac)	175-350	5.0	6.0	7.0
Resort Accommodation Area B	4 to 5 ha (10 to 12 ac)	75-150	7.5	10.0	12.5
Resort Accommodation Area C	7 to 9 ha (17 to 22 ac)	100-250	6.0	8.5	11.0
Resort Accommodation Area D	3 to 5 ha (7.5 to 12.5 ac)	100-350	13.0	20.5	28.0
Resort Accommodation Area E	45 to 70 ha (110 to 170 ac)	500-1,000	4.5	5.25	6.0
Total	116 to 162 ha (287 to 400 ac)	1,600–3,450	7	10	12

- Between 400 and 700 Resort Accommodation units may be provided within the Core Resort area (Location of higher density accommodation development closer to the Resort Core is encouraged to facilitate walking and cycling);
- Mixed-use node proposed to be located in the centre of the Smith Creek ASP area.
- Between 250 and 650 Resort Accommodation units may be provided within the Resort Expansion area.
- **Total Units: 1,600 – 3,450**
- **Projected Population (2.4 persons/household) : 3,840 – 8,280 residents**
- Proposed shift of the Across Valley corridor identified in the Smith Creek ASP area.

- **Resort Centre**
 - Year-round focused, pedestrian resort core.
 - Active-transportation trails provided.
 - Spa, health and wellness facilities, with retail offerings that compliment Main Street Canmore.
 - Public spaces that are intended to be programmed with activities and events.
 - Other parks and naturalized spaces, including off-leash dog parks.
 - Continuum of care for seniors provided in the Resort Centre.
 - Includes permanent and temporary housing.

Existing Conditions of the Wildlife Corridor

- These corridors are largely functional under existing conditions, but there are concerns surrounding the potential for human-wildlife interactions.
- Current wildlife corridor uses a 'soft-edge'. As a result, there are too many people (and dogs) in the wildlife corridors, and wildlife are coming into the developed area, both of which increases the risk for negative human-wildlife interactions and decreases corridor efficacy.
- Most human use in the corridor occurs on undesignated trails.
- The primary issue is negative human-wildlife conflicts, not animal movement in the corridors.
- There has been an increase in wolf usage of the corridors recently.
- The Bow Valley is a 'sink' for bears, where many are attracted to the Valley but fewer leave (due to negative human-wildlife interactions).
- Education and recreational alternatives are necessary in conjunction with the corridors to improve safety and efficacy.
- Wildlife corridors are considered functional if:
 - Wildlife populations within the Bow Valley can use those corridors to meet their daily requirements;
 - They connect habitat patches;
 - They provide genetic connectivity; and
 - The corridors allows wildlife to use the corridor without being 'removed' due to a human-wildlife interaction.

Proposed Mitigations

- Proposed a fence line that encircles the Resort Centre and goes through the Stewart Creek Golf Course and along and around the moved Across Valley corridor. It also goes along the proposed corridor to the Province for the Smith Creek corridor.
- Proposed adding another 350 metres down from the 25 degree line to the approved 1998 corridor to 'fix the gap' between the 1998 and the 2002 corridors. We also wanted to add more width to the areas of the corridor that were of concern during the 2013 application.
- Approximately 40% of the total Resort Centre plan area consists of wildlife corridors, comprised of an integrated cross-valley and along-valley wildlife corridor system.

- New research and evidence suggests that soft-edges to wildlife corridors decrease the overall effectiveness of the corridor and increase the risk of negative human-wildlife interactions; therefore, hard-edges, such as a fence, are recommended.
 - At the time of the Resort Centre ASP in 2004, it was thought that a soft edge (locating a low density use adjacent to the wildlife corridor to extend the corridor and provide a buffer between humans and wildlife) would be an effective way to separate humans and wildlife.
 - Experience has shown that the soft edge provides wildlife with greater access to the attractants in Town and does little to discourage humans from recreating in the wildlife corridor.
 - Consequently, Provincial and the project biologists now advocate for a hard edge alternative.
 - The Project Team explored the option of both a fence and a higher density development as hard edge alternatives.
 - In the spring of 2016, the Project Team hosted a workshop with wildlife interaction and fencing experts from Alberta Environment and Parks, and Parks Canada. The consensus amongst experts is that a fence could work in Canmore to reduce human wildlife interaction with the understanding that a fence will not be perfect and that there would still be intrusions. A fence needed to be part of a holistic solution that also included education and enforcement.
 - Swing gates would be located at intervals along the fence to ensure that there is a method to deal with intrusions; wildlife conflict specialists did not favour jump-outs.
- The risks of soft-edges outweigh the benefits.
- At completion, the entire wildlife corridor will be fenced, with clearly identified recreational crossings and trails.

Concluding Remarks

- Presenters thanked attendees for participating and asking questions.
- Those questions which could not be answered during the session will be addressed on the Smith Creek and Resort Centre websites:
 - <http://www.smithcreekcanmore.ca> and <http://www.resortcentrecanmore.ca>
- QPD and the Town of Canmore will be hosting a public session on September 27, 2016 at the Canmore Coast Hotel.
- There will be another Online Community Conversation, regarding undermining, on October 5, 2016.
- Invitation to provide feedback on the conversation format and information presented. This was the first attempt of a live online community conversation by QPD or the Town of Canmore.