

# Smith Creek Area Structure Plan

**PHASE 1: PROJECT START AND VISIONING**

## Public Engagement Report

August 2015



## Project Overview

The Town of Canmore and Three Sisters Mountain Village (TSMV) are working together to create a development plan for the Smith Creek lands in TSMV, more commonly known as Sites 7, 8 & 9. This collaborative process with the Canmore community will facilitate the creation of a policy document that is built upon the principles of working together in order to seek common ground and find workable solutions. The process involves addressing the opportunities and concerns from multiple perspectives while at the same time working towards an outcome that provides the right balance between economic, social, and environmental matters.

The purpose of undertaking a new ASP for the Smith Creek area is to create certainty for the landowners, the community, and the Town for future development on the remaining Three Sisters lands. The preparation of the Smith Creek ASP does not necessarily mean that development of the land in question is imminent or immediate; an ASP is one of the many steps required before land can be developed.

The process for developing the Smith Creek ASP has incorporated the Canmore community at the early stages of planning and will continue to do so throughout the process. The goal is to have a transparent process that is well communicated to the public and creates a common understanding of the "why" and "how" the draft policy is developed and proposed to Council. The result being an Area Structure Plan for Smith Creek that incorporates the needs of the community with the vision for the Town of Canmore and TSMV, and that TSMV, the Town and the community will have a better understanding of why or why not a certain outcome could or could not be achieved. As much as possible, we will seek mutually acceptable solutions, but acknowledge that this may not always be possible.

## Summary of the Process to Date

Phase 1 of the Smith Creek Area Structure Plan process focused on establishing the overall framework that will guide the concept plan and defines the technical studies required to be undertaken in "Phase 2: Exploration". A project launch Open House was held in late May to kick-off the initial engagement. The purpose was to involve the community early in the conversation of how to effectively develop a plan for the Smith Creek lands in TSMV. The Town of Canmore and TSMV are committed to a more collaborative and transparent process for the development of an Area Structure Plan for the Smith Creek lands. This



new approach to collaboratively planning for the future development of these lands integrates public engagement throughout the ASP process and provides multiple ways in which the Canmore community can provide feedback or input.

A project launch Open House was held in late May to kick-off the initial engagement, raise awareness of the process, and invite the community to get involved in the conversation of how to effectively develop a plan for the Smith Creek lands in Three Sisters Mountain Village (TSMV).

In June, a Community Advisory Group (CAG) was formed. The CAG is a selection of volunteers who represent a range of local perspectives and a cross-section of the community. The CAG meetings are led by an experienced facilitator, with the Smith Creek Project Team acting as technical advisors where required to assist the CAG discussions. Two meetings have already occurred, with one meeting in June and the second in July. CAG meetings are planned every month from now until April 2016. The initial meetings focused mainly on creating an understanding of the role of the CAG and providing relevant background information on the history of the land to ensure all members were on the same level of understanding regarding the constraints and opportunities in time for the August meeting.

In addition to the input from the CAG, there will be many opportunities for the broader public to participate in the ASP process including traditional means such as open houses to less traditional means such as solution based workshops, through social media and PlaceSpeak, an online engagement tool. Council will also receive periodic updates on the process. These Council meetings are open to the public and provide another opportunity for members of the public to stay involved and informed about the process.

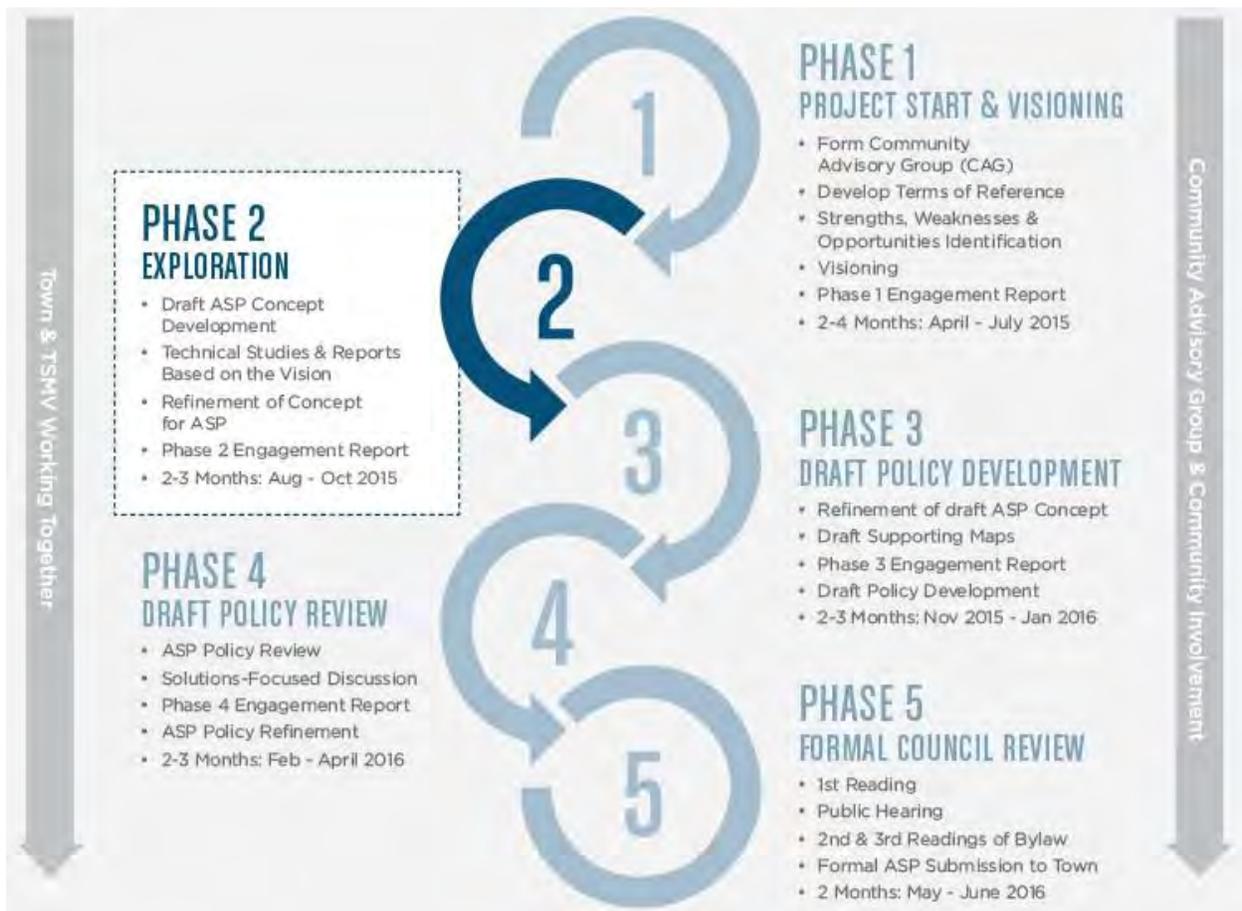
## Next Steps

The collaborative process established for the Smith Creek ASP is iterative; it is about balance and a focus on solutions that work for the community, the Town, and TSMV. We anticipate that a public discussion on the constraints and opportunities, the first draft of the ASP concept for the Smith Creek plan area, and an opportunity to discuss wildlife corridors will occur with the broader community in the fall as part of “Phase 2: Exploration”. Members of the CAG will continue to meet monthly to discuss constraints and opportunities, assist in developing the draft concept and the community will have the opportunity to



provide input and feedback on the Smith Creek draft concept including wildlife corridors, undermining and other concerns at various points in the process.

Even though this collaborative process allows for many opportunities for public engagement, we are in the early stages and only a small proportion of the total engagement has taken place to date. Once we know more about the technical constraints, have had the opportunity to discuss the wildlife corridors and other concerns such as undermining, and move into the concept development phase of the process, there will be many more opportunities for the broader community to get involved and provide input.



## Phase 1 Engagement

### [April 21, 2015 – Working Together Guideline and draft Community Advisory Group Terms of Reference presented to Council](#)

The Working Together Guideline was developed and outlines a process whereby the Canmore community, the Town, and other key stakeholders can be involved early on in the planning process to provide input into the development of the Smith Creek ASP. Council gave direction for administration to proceed through the collaborative ASP process in accordance with the Working Together Guideline. A draft Community Advisory Group Terms of Reference was also presented to Council to provide details of how a Community Advisory Group could be used throughout the ASP development process.

### [April 23, 2015 – Project website \[www.smithcreekcanmore.ca\]\(http://www.smithcreekcanmore.ca\) goes live](#)

As part of the project launch, The Town, TSMV, and QuantumPlace Developments (QPD) created a Smith Creek ASP project website, **[smithcreekcanmore.ca](http://www.smithcreekcanmore.ca)**, in order to provide public access to project updates, background documents, Frequently Asked Questions, and other relevant information to the project. Visitors to the site are also sign up for the Smith Creek Newsletter and to get involved in the discussion and provide valuable feedback throughout the process by using the PlaceSpeak engagement tool.

### [April, 2015 – PlaceSpeak Online Engagement](#)

Embedded within the [smithcreekcanmore.ca](http://smithcreekcanmore.ca) website is our PlaceSpeak engagement page, found in the Feedback tab. PlaceSpeak is a unique engagement tool that is being used as an online channel to allow the community to participate in discussion topics and provide feedback on various features of the Smith Creek ASP. PlaceSpeak represents only one part of the overall engagement but it provides an effective alternative for people who may not be able to attend an open house or engagement session in person. Both the website and the PlaceSpeak page are monitored and the feedback received will be responded to.

### [April – May 2015 – Call for Community Advisory Group Volunteer Members](#)

The Project team put out a call for volunteers from the Canmore community to get involved in the process to develop the Smith Creek Area Structure Plan. Engaged residents who felt they represented a valuable perspective and could provide input throughout the planning process were encouraged to apply during this period. The call for members for the Smith Creek Community Advisory Group generated lots of interest in the community and many high quality applications were received. After careful consideration of each applicant's qualifications, experience and perspective, and following a series of interviews with short-listed candidates, the Community Advisory Group was selected by the Project Team. Significant effort was made to ensure that a diverse set of perspectives are represented on the Community Advisory Group.



### May 20, 2015 – Kick-Off Open House

A kick-off open house was held to provide an introduction to the project and give an overview of the collaborative process the ASP will follow. Information regarding timelines, affected lands, and further details on the role of the CAG was also available. Planners from both The Town of Canmore and QPD were on hand to answer questions and encourage people to leave comments and feedback.

### June 25, 2015 – First Community Advisory Group Meeting

Following the formation of the CAG in mid-June, the first meeting was held on June 25, 2015. This meeting focused on getting to know each of the members better and to understand the role of the CAG and their responsibility as committee members. A summary of the discussion at this meeting follows below.

### June 30, 2015 – Smith Creek ASP Terms of Reference presented to Council

The Terms of Reference is a broad, over-arching document that defines general project scope and identifies required studies for developing the Smith Creek Area Structure Plan. It provides the policy context of the plan and describes the purpose and vision of the Area Structure Plan. The Terms of Reference was approved by Council on June 30, 2015. It is the start of one of the many steps required to develop a plan for the Smith Creek lands. Comments received from the public regarding concern over the environmental study and wording were addressed through a Council amendment to the Terms of Reference for the ASP.

### July 16, 2015 – Second Community Advisory Group Meeting

The CAG met for a second time on July 16, 2015. The focus of this meeting was to provide members of the group new to the history of the development with background information so everyone would have the same level of understanding of the constraints and opportunities. The group discussed constraints and high level potential solutions to the connectivity of wildlife corridors in the Wind Valley area. A summary of the discussion at this meeting follows below.

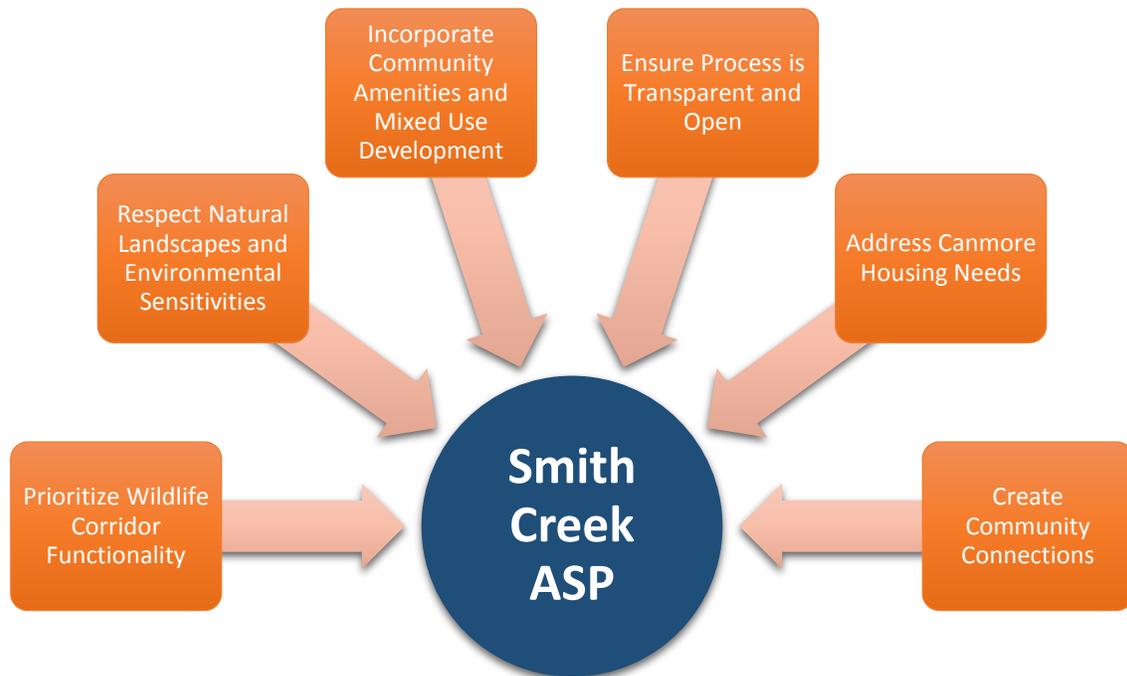
## What We Heard

The following outlines the themes that summarize the general feedback and comments we received to date from the various engagement activities. They represent what some members of the Canmore community feel are important factors to consider for the development of the Smith Creek Area Structure Plan. Where the Project Team has responded to specific questions or discussion posts, a summary of the responses are included in this report. Additionally, the Smith Creek Project Team created a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to address some of the most commonly asked questions and concerns, which is available on the [smithcreekcanmore.ca](http://smithcreekcanmore.ca) website.



The subsequent tables are a compilation of the direct feedback received between April 2015 to July 2015 from the following sources:

- Open House on May 20, 2015;
- Correspondence received in the [info@smithcreekcanmore.ca](mailto:info@smithcreekcanmore.ca) email address;
- PlaceSpeak discussion comments; and
- The first two initial Community Advisory Group meetings.



## Kick-Off Open House May 20, 2015

### Comments/Questions/Feedback

#### Commercial Considerations

- Buildings with residential mixed use

#### Residential Considerations

- Keep mountain theme in design – Sustainable materials – Multi-housing
- Cluster housing to minimize footprint
- Connectivity – build gathering spots

#### Environmental Considerations

- Biking/Pedestrian paths
- Water conservation
- Design Control – Landscape
- Maximum protection of wildlife corridors so they don't become multi use highways
- Please do not clear cut – Maintain the wonderful character of Canmore

#### Social/Community Fabric Considerations

- Make sure to include playgrounds
- Don't make it into a suburb – Need to have more benefit to Canmore than homes
- Connection to community
- Think services not industrial
- Don't make houses

#### General Comments

- Make sure there are local commercial services in this area so people do not have to all come downtown (i.e. gas)
- Cluster houses and leave more open spaces
- Optimistic on the new process. Think it's great to have a CAG to guide the process.
- Need to see wildlife corridor boundaries. They should be appropriately located below the 25 degree slope. This needs to be accurately



determined.

- Make sure flood and undermining studies are done
- What happens if the developer just pulls out of the process?
- Not against development, just want to make sure it is done well and considers the environment
- Need to make sure that appropriate mitigation is done to keep people out of the wildlife corridors (education, signage, enforcement)
- Generally supportive of the new collaborative approach but are cautiously optimistic
- Not entirely in agreement with the timeline of past events and historic milestones
- Some concerns around the planning process and frustration with hearing “those details will be available at a later stage”.
- Encouragement to ensure that we are upfront and transparent with how proposed policies are both consistent and in-consistent with other TOC statutory plans.
- A professional facilitator may be important for different aspects of the process. The concern is around parties with a stake in the process (TSMV, the Town) being unable to objectively facilitate. Use of facilitators may be important for CAG meetings and different working sessions with the project team as we get deeper into the process.
- Will undermining be looked at? Is this area undermined?
- What is happening with the unfinished golf course?
- Keep patches of trees/authentic landscape “as is” within any new development so a sense of the authentic environment is maintained.
- Cut trees down in stages – clear cutting all at once is disturbing and upsetting to see but if it were down in stages it would “soften the blow”
- Understand the culture of Canmore thoroughly – not just the surface e.g. travel/tourist industry, environmentally-minded etc. but also the old school culture – blue collar miners type. Have all these cultures and heritage represented.



<b>info@smithcreekcanmore.ca</b>	
<b>Comment/Question/Feedback</b>	<b>Response</b>
A community member showed interest in how the Community Advisory Group meetings would be facilitated and offered their assistance and facilitation experience if needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An experienced external facilitator was retained to lead the meetings and work with the project team and the committee members to moderate discussion topics at each meeting.</li> </ul>
An inquiry from a resident who has built homes in Canmore before and is interested in staying informed on future building opportunities with the Smith Creek development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Their contact information was added to the email distribution list to keep them up to date on the process.</li> </ul>
After it was announced that the CAG members were selected, an individual wanted to know when the names of those selected would be released.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The names of those selected for the Community Advisory Group were not released immediately as the project team wanted to discuss with the group as a whole at the first meeting if they are okay with their names being made public.</li> </ul>
A community member mentioned that the land in question is within Treaty Seven and wanted to know who was ensuring that the Treaty of rights of the First Nations were being respected in the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The opportunity to participate and provide input at the various public engagement events throughout the process are open to everyone, including First Nations communities.</li> </ul>
A community member inquired if the Community Advisory Group meeting discussions are open to the public and if the meeting notes or presentations would be made available to the public. Concerns over a lack of transparency and secrecy with the meetings were expressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Community Advisory Group meetings are only one part of the public engagement for the Smith Creek ASP process and there are many other opportunities for the wider community to get involved in the process and provide input. Some of the information shared with the Community Advisory Group are confidential and are not ready for public consumption. The notes from all meetings are posted on the smithcreekcanmore.ca website.</li> </ul>



<b>PlaceSpeak Discussion</b>	
Discussion Topic Comment	Responses
<b>What do you think are important residential considerations in planning for the Smith Creek lands?</b>	
The most important residential consideration is affordability of housing for full time Canmore residents. Lot size restrictions and building footprint restrictions are just two of the many tools available to prevent Canmore's remaining land being carved up and devoured by millionaire second home owners. Smaller, compact single family housing on smaller lots to mean new inventory on the market may not reach the astronomical prices which are currently listed for homes in 3 sisters. (if single family zoning could be avoided entirely that would help too). Narrow lot, Z shaped lots, and modular housing have all been used effectively before to address affordability. Courtyard housing, coach housing, micro and secondary suites are other options.	This will be included in future discussions at the CAG.
No clear cuts, please. That has already been done in the area. Enough. Trees must be part of the development. No big parking lots. Development done with people in mind, and the future. Sustainable materials use only. Greenhouses. Pathways and trails through the area.	This will be included in future discussions at the CAG.
<b>What do you think are important commercial considerations in planning for the Smith Creek lands?</b>	
Wouldn't it be great to include a centre for learning, conversation, research and meetings? A retreat environment for fresh thinking, new ideas and perspective shifting.	This will be included in future discussions at the CAG.
<b>What do you think are important environmental considerations in planning for the Smith Creek lands?</b>	
Our local, "Made in Canmore" experts (ie. Karsten Heuer, Heather Macfayden) need to advise and layout the functional wildlife corridors that need to be put in place from one end of the Three Sisters property to the other. Then, these need to be mapped and protected in perpetuity once and for all. The Province has not done a good job of creating functional corridors on the property, which is why the local experts must make the decisions of what will work. The corridors for all the wildlife to flow through this area must be protected as our 1st priority above all else. This is a non-negotiable area and the very first step before anything else can be discussed.	Karsten Heuer is on the Community Advisory Group and is working and consulting with his peers on wildlife corridors to provide input to the CAG. While the decision to determine the wildlife corridors remains with the Province, public discussion will occur in the fall at the next open house.



Maintaining the wildlife corridor is a must and the key is a "Functional" wildlife corridor. The ones currently in place are not functional. Changes need to be made. This must be our 1st priority and 1st step in the process.

This will be included in future discussions at the CAG.



## June 25, 2015 Community Advisory Group Meeting

The CAG discussed a number of items at the first meeting on June 25. The focus was on getting to know each other. The majority of the meeting was spent on the following three key questions:

### 1. What experience/knowledge/skills do you feel you bring to the group?

- It was noted that the make-up of the Advisory Group is wide ranging and balanced:
  - Subject area specialists
  - Facilitators
  - Community leaders
  - Long-time residents
  - Young families
  
- The Advisory Group feels they are also representative of:
  - Residents both in Canmore and from within TSMV
  - Business, community
  - Development industry
  - Special interest areas such as wildlife and recreation
  - Historical context
  - Future context

### 2. What are your expectations for the Community Advisory Group?

- That we respect different points of view in our discussions and understand that while our language may be different, we have common ground
- That we are open with each other in our discussions
- That the broader process is transparent
- That the Group is solutions oriented
- That we are not limited by past thoughts and that we have a clean slate to discuss new solutions to issues
- That even if we don't agree, we represent our discussions fairly and honestly to members of the community
- That we find solutions to issues identified by the community where possible, to take advantage of opportunities
- That if our solution(s) is not possible, we are given a reason why
- That we can walk away from this process feeling that we made a difference and that we are proud of our work

### 3. What does success look like for you?



- That the final recommendations allow for recreational space for many to use and enjoy
- That the ASP provides enough space for wildlife to live in a relatively undisturbed way
- That the ASP provides guidelines for development that keeps the “small town feel” – the things we love about our community and at the same time provides sustainability so that young families can stay and work
- That the ASP provides certainty and allows future developments to be viable and sustainable for both the developer and for the Town of Canmore and its residents
- That the process is not divisive in the community
- That our views are taken seriously and our input is evident in the final recommendations within the ASP
- That the process is iterative and changes made are based on feedback and input either through CAG members or the broader engagement activities
- That the development that results from the ASP is financial successful and provides opportunities for economic growth in our community
- That the development that results from the ASP is successful so that desires of the community such as wildlife and recreation amenities can be addressed
- That the end product works for businesses, the community and the developers
- That the process works, the discussion robust and that ultimately Council feels comfortable approving the ASP
- That at the end of the day, we still talk to each other on the street

The Group also discussed the Terms of Reference for the CAG, briefly discussed the Terms of Reference for the Smith Creek ASP and were provided with a high level background presentation. Members of the Group expressed gratitude for being involved in the process and were hopeful that this time the issues can be discussed and solutions found that meet the long term needs of the Town of Canmore. The notes from this meeting are posted on the website [smithcreekcanmore.ca](http://smithcreekcanmore.ca).

### July 16, 2015 CAG Meeting

The Community Advisory Group met for a second time on July 16. While TSMV provided most of the background, other CAG members were encouraged to share perceptions and experiences from previous processes.

The focus of the meeting was on providing members of the group new to the history of the development with background information so we can start our discussions in August with the same understanding of the constraints and opportunities.

During the review of the background information, the CAG covered some major topic areas and had early open discussions about the different aspects of the project including:

- History of the lands – mining, tourism, development



- Ownership of the lands in and around Canmore showing key areas, boundary of Canmore and MD of Bighorn, developable vs undevelopable, Thunderstone Quarry (lease and owned mining operations) and the extent of Three Sisters lands (Resort Centre, Stewart Creek, Sites 7, 8 & 9).
- Previous processes – community and developer perceptions and the precedent of working with each other in this collaborative process. All agreed that there is good value in working through the common issues that people deal with as this will create a place/community that people want to live in.
- Previous decisions including those made by the NRCB with regard to wildlife corridors, how the policy flows from the NRCB Decision Report, what has changed and the acknowledgement made by the NRCB of community input into their last decisions on wildlife corridors
- Undermining across the entire area including a detailed review of areas
- Wildlife corridors both existing and previously proposed, science behind the slope and size of corridors
- A vision for the development

Members of the CAG asked a number of questions throughout the review which lead to an open discussions of a number of issues and concerns. Those questions and answers will be posted on the [smithcreekcanmore.ca](http://smithcreekcanmore.ca) website after the August meeting.

