

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT – THREE SISTERS VILLAGE

Report prepared/written by Golder Associates Ltd., May 2020



Three Sisters Mountain Village (TSMV) owns roughly 80 per cent of the developable land left in Canmore and will be seeking Town of Canmore approval to move forward with their plans to develop two areas: Three Sisters Village, a resort area, and Smith Creek, a new residential community. Our Area Structure Plans (ASPs) have been informed by numerous supporting studies. This document provides a summary of the highlights from the more than 430-page Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), completed by Golder Associates. This EIS has been reviewed by Town of Canmore Administration, as well as a third-party reviewer, MSES.

Background:

Three Sisters Village is located at the western edge of the TSMV land holdings, in the area often referred to as the unfinished golf course. The Village is envisioned to be a hub of activity and will include: hotels; tourist homes; employee housing; homes for residents; recreation opportunities; complete streets that provide easy access to walking, biking and transit; and an Innovation District, positioned to help generate a local and diverse economy.

Purpose:

The purpose of the EIS is to provide information about the potential environmental impacts of the future Village and recommended mitigations. The EIS was prepared to meet the Terms of Reference (TOR) issued by the Town of Canmore. Because stakeholders were especially concerned about the impacts on wildlife, particularly wildlife movement and human-wildlife interactions, this topic area was given greatest focus in the EIS. An analysis of human use impacts on wildlife populations and habitats was key to evaluating the effects of the development and cumulative effects on wildlife.



Description of the Areas

The Village Centre is envisioned as a vibrant, pedestrian centric area with homes located above stores and restaurants. A landmark hotel, tourist homes, plazas and patios are all envisioned within this area.

The Boutique Hotel and Spa District provides a more secluded and quiet location for hotels and spa facilities outside the bustle of the Village Centre.

The Innovation District is a place where the creative, entrepreneurial and manufacturing community can have an opportunity to flourish and support diversification of Canmore's economy. This area will feature flexible spaces for Canmore businesses to work, manufacture and sell their products and services.

The Residential District is intended to accommodate permanent residents of Canmore and will accommodate townhomes, stacked townhomes and apartment buildings. There will be no single-detached homes in Three Sisters Village.

Open space intended to support Resort Recreation as well as municipal recreation opportunities surrounds the development and pathways and other key pedestrian connections will connect the entire area to other areas of Canmore.

MITIGATIONS

The EIS outlines several requirements and mitigations for the development. In general, the mitigations that will be applied to the development are:

- » Wildlife fencing
- » Attractant management
- » Education
- » Provision of high-quality recreational amenities within the development such as a comprehensive trail system, including mountain bike trails, and off-leash dog parks.
- » A development phasing strategy tied to a Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan.

A comprehensive list of all requirements and mitigations for the development are outlined in Table 50 of the EIS.

WILDLIFE FENCING

A wildlife fence will be erected along the perimeter of Three Sisters Village and Smith Creek, and connect to the fence along the highway, where possible. Access points to Provincially designated trails will be facilitated through gated entry points. Signs will be used to educate residents and guests about the importance of the wildlife corridors and appropriate behaviours expected within them.

To help ensure the fence will be effective, attractants that could result in animals wanting to breach the fence will still be managed. The Town of Canmore Attractant Management Bylaw will help communities within TSMV manage these attractants by regulating wildlife attractants, such as landscaping, garbage, BBQs and bird feeders.

Recreation opportunities provided within the developments will help alleviate human use pressure on the corridors and provide an alternative to recreating within areas designated for wildlife movement. Recreational amenities, such as designated off-leash dog parks, mountain bike trails, and more, will provide a positive alternative to inappropriate human use of the wildlife corridor.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PROGRAM

Monitoring

Monitoring refers to the data on wildlife that will be collected as it relates to development and the success of the mitigations proposed for TSMV within the EIS. TSMV has conducted monitoring on wildlife movement for many years and will establish a new science-based program to monitor the development as it progresses. Adding to our current inventory of wildlife data, a new baseline of information will be collected to compare present day activities and any changes that occur within the corridors.

Adaptive Management

The Adaptive Management section of the EIS outlines the approach to the mitigations and monitoring so they can be adjusted over time, if and when necessary. The identification of metrics, targets and thresholds within the Adaptive Management Plan will allow for the evaluation of data against the expected outcomes predicted in the EIS. Adaptation is not always necessary, however if monitoring identifies important changes from the predictions in the EIS, then adaptation would be explored.

Adaptions

Adaptation would depend on the type and cause of the deviation from the EIS predictions, and may need to be applied to the developer, the Town, or the Province, depending on the situation.

Potential adaptations include:

- » Updating education materials
- » Implementing or increasing habitat improvements within wildlife corridors or habitat patches
- » Increasing enforcement
- » Opening new trails or consolidating existing trails
- » Adapting recreation opportunities offered by the Town or on TSMV-owned land
- » Closing trails or adjusting when they can be accessed
- » Adjusting fence construction design
- » Examining timed entry or guided entry into the corridors
- » Other solutions as deemed appropriate to address the identified concern.

CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COLLABORATION:

TSMV commits to becoming a participant on the Technical Working Group for Improving Human Wildlife Co-Existence, a cross-jurisdictional committee made of NGO's, government and technical stakeholders committed to develop and support initiatives regarding wildlife conflict and co-existence in the Bow Valley.

THIRD-PARTY REVIEW OF THE EIS

A Third-Party Review of the EIS was conducted by MSES and paid for by the Town of Canmore. The reviewer concluded:

- » Three Sisters Village EIS meets the Terms of Reference established at the beginning of the project
- » While the Third-Party Reviewer did not always agree on the degree of impact predications outlined within the EIS, they did agree with the suite of recommendations outlined including education, attractant management, inclusion of recreational elements within the development area, monitoring and adaptive management.

All requirements for the development are summarized in Three Sisters Village EIS on Table 50, and referenced in the ASP policy as a requirement for development compliance.

The EIS is available at: www.tsmv.ca/three-sisters-village/.