

Summer Village of Ghost Lake SUSTAINABILITY PLAN



Final Plan
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council of the Summer Village of Ghost Lake (SVGL) identified the need to develop a Sustainability Plan in 2010 because the Village had come to a point in its evolution where the lack of a formalized sustainability plan and municipal development plan (MDP) was compromising its ability to access Provincial funding and to ensure Village quality of life is maintained or improved into the future.

The *Sustainability Plan* was prepared by the SVGL Sustainability Plan Working Group (SPWG) at the request of Council and with the assistance of a planning consultant. This is a plan 'by the Village and for the Village', the *Plan* is the product of four village workshops, presentations and working meetings over 18 months in 2010-2011, with the contribution of over 700 hours of volunteer time by over 80 Villagers.

The *Sustainability Plan* provides the village with a roadmap to the future by:

- Articulating a shared vision and values for the village
- Increasing understanding of village issues and assets and the connections between them
- Focusing the village on effective and efficient actions
- Encouraging widespread ownership and commitment to action

Strategic Areas Addressed in the Plan

Like village life, this plan embraces all aspects of the community. At two Village workshops in the summer of 2010, villagers identified common values, vision elements and issues to be included in the planning process. This advice was used by the SPWG to identify the strategic areas around which the plan's strategies and actions were developed, they include:

<i>Municipal Services and Infrastructure</i>	<i>Built Environment</i>	<i>Natural Environment</i>
<i>Lake Stewardship</i>	<i>Communications</i>	<i>Social/Village Life</i>
<i>Municipal Finances</i>	<i>Governance</i>	

Key Steps in the Planning Process

The Summer Village of Ghost Lake took a community-based approach to developing this plan:

1. *Village visioning workshops (Summer 2010)*: Invited Villagers to begin the conversation about the village today and in the future, identifying Villager's values, vision and issues of concern.
2. *Structuring the process (Fall 2010)*: Council approved the proposed process; Council appointed the Sustainability Plan Working Group (SPWG) volunteers.
3. *Understanding the sustainability gap for key sustainability topic areas*: For each topic area, the following were developed:
 - a. **A Description of Success**: describes the desired future state of the community, "*We will be successful when...*" Together, the Descriptions of Success for the various topic areas represent a more detailed articulation of the community's desired future expressed at a high level in the vision.
 - b. **A Description of Current Reality**: outlines the current challenges and assets, "*Our strengths and challenges are...*"
 - c. **Strategies and initiatives to bridge the gap** between the current reality and the desired future as outlined in the vision and description of success
4. *Village review and revision of the draft plan* (via two village workshops in the summer of 2011)
5. *Review of Village feedback by the Working Group*: preparation of the proposed plan for Council
6. *Non-statutory public hearing* of Council to consider and approve the Sustainability Plan (Winter 2012)
7. *Ongoing action planning, volunteer recruitment and monitoring of progress* toward the vision and descriptions of success.

Our Village Values

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect• Environmental Stewardship• Shared responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety• Our village way of life — our haven on the lake• Local governance |
|---|---|

Our Village Vision

The people, lake and parkland are the heart of The Summer Village of Ghost Lake. We value our village way of life and together we are responsible for the stewardship of our community. We make decisions based on respect for each other, responsibility for our actions, stewardship and open participation.

We envision a community, to be inherited by our children and grand-children, that:

- *Has local governance with open communication, active participation and strong ethics.*
- *Acknowledges and lives within our means, matching services to the financial and volunteer resources available.*
- *Provides appropriate services for safety, recreation, maintenance of community facilities and social activity.*
- *Has clear standards and guidelines that support safety and stewardship of our shared land and water.*
- *Actively protects and minimizes impact on the lake and the environment around us, and maintains the low-density and low profile character in our village.*

The village is a friendly community that naturally fits into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

Sustainability Plan — Priorities & Suggested Actions

The SPWG also looked across the strategic areas addressed in the Plan to identify the highest priority initiatives. 'Top Priorities' were defined as initiatives deemed to be the most important, the ones the Village must get right, and hence must move forward on, either over the short, medium or longer term.

Key Principles:

The SPWG also identified the following principles to guide action on the Plan and priorities.

- This is a small village with a modest tax base and a desire to live within our means, matching the municipal services provided to the financial and volunteer resources available.
- Plan implementation relies on action/engagement of three main groups:
 - 1) Council
 - 2) Volunteers & volunteer committees
Volunteer effort will build on the great work of existing volunteers to date, and must also include recruitment of new volunteers for success to be possible.
 - 3) Individual Villagers.

Recommendations

- a. **Adopt the Village Values and Vision as a guideline** for decision-making and interaction with the community. It is also recommended that the vision and values also serve as a reference point for the actions and interactions of Villagers.
- b. **Create Four Committees of Council** – Volunteer ‘Action Teams’ with co- chairs that would develop action plans (based on the Preferred Future Initiatives & Strategies outlined in the Plan) and recruit volunteer support to make the Plan happen
 - i. Public Works
 - ii. Fire Prevention & First Response
 - iii. Communication & Village Social Life (proposed to include the existing Recreation Committee and a volunteer coordinator)
 - iv. Natural Environment and Lake Stewardship
- c. **Institute an annual plan implementation and review cycle** (e.g., At the AGM, Council reports on the overall progress of the plan and each committee reports to Villagers on progress to date, the action plan for the summer and recruits volunteers to assist with their plans.)
- d. **Develop a Municipal Development Plan** based on the direction of the *Sustainability Plan*, upon Plan approval.
- e. **Review and update the Plan periodically** through inclusive Village engagement.

	Suggested Actions		
Priority Initiatives	Council could...	Volunteer Groups could...	Villagers could...
1. Improve how we approach maintenance in the Village <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at best approaches (who, how, guidelines, etc.) for ongoing maintenance of parks, roads, the waterfront, community hall, etc. as well as clarifying risks and liabilities (i.e. safety standards of equipment, insurance of operators). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Endorse Terms of Reference for Public Works Committee - Identify a council “portfolio” leader - Pay for materials - Pay contractor to undertake maintenance/do repairs, if volunteers are unavailable or unable to provide the service needed. - Hire summer students - Insure volunteers - Authorize volunteer groups and keep clear lists of volunteer work - Carefully consider new infrastructure as it relates to future maintenance requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a volunteer group and identify co-chairs / co-coordinators - Identify specific tasks to be completed - Determine how best to schedule volunteers - Keep a clear list of upcoming volunteer work - Improve communication - Develop guidelines for operating Village equipment - Provide supervision for summer staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continually do their part (e.g. pick up garbage, cut grass, keep medians tidy, etc.) - Sign-up to volunteer

<p>2. Improve a) fire prevention b) first response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Endorse Terms of Reference for Fire Prevention & First Response Committee - Identify a council portfolio leader - Budget for equipment, training, communication - Maintain fire contracts with Cochrane - Provide insurance and registration for volunteers and vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a group with co-coordinators who host meetings and training (first response & equipment) - Cut grass - Develop policies like "save the neighbours" - Set fire bans - Create a plan for the burn pile - Look into contracting Cochrane to do fire safety inspections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep properties clean and mowed, lessening the risks of fire
<p>3. Improve village communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a) Form a volunteer working group, b) Confirm villagers' communication needs; c) Develop options and an action plan. • Improve Village emergency communications • Improve Village social life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Endorse Terms of Reference for Communication and Village Social Life Committee - Identify a council portfolio leader - Budget for communication tools (i.e. bulletin board, website, etc.) - Increase Council communication and transparency - Proactively seek citizen input into decisions - Support Village newsletter - Make Council-meeting minutes available to Villagers in a timely manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a volunteer group and identify co-chairs / co-coordinators to develop and implement a plan - Develop an emergency 'phone tree' by equipping a Coordinator with a phone list - Create a new neighbour welcome package and team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Go to the website - Connect with other Villagers to share what is going on - Read the newsletter and bulletin board
<p>4. Develop a natural area strategy to learn about and preserve our natural environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Endorse Terms of Reference for Natural Environment Committee - Identify a council portfolio leader - Budget to hire an expert/naturalist to assess baseline - Approve a natural area strategy - Authorize a group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a volunteer group and identify co-chairs / co-coordinators - Inventory what SVGL has and what is threatened or needs protection - Develop a natural area strategy - Create and help implement an action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get informed, be aware, act responsibly
<p>5. Develop a lake stewardship plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Endorse Terms of Reference for Lake Stewardship Committee - Identify a council portfolio leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a volunteer group and identify co-chairs / co-coordinators toward developing a lake stewardship strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use best practices and maintenance to prevent polluting the lake (e.g., Avoid putting paint/toxic substances into the burn pile)

How will this Plan be used?

Once approved by Council, the plan will provide a proactive basis for coordinated action on three levels – Council initiatives, committee and volunteer actions, and households choosing to take individual responsibility to live in more sustainable ways.

The *Sustainability Plan* provides the foundation for further work Council and villagers will undertake, including the preparation of a municipal development plan (MDP) for the Village and related capital infrastructure and investment programs. Ideally, over time all Village actions will align with the plan. The plan will be reviewed periodically through inclusive village engagement processes and will be updated or amended, as necessary, through future non-statutory public hearings of Council.

PART A: BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

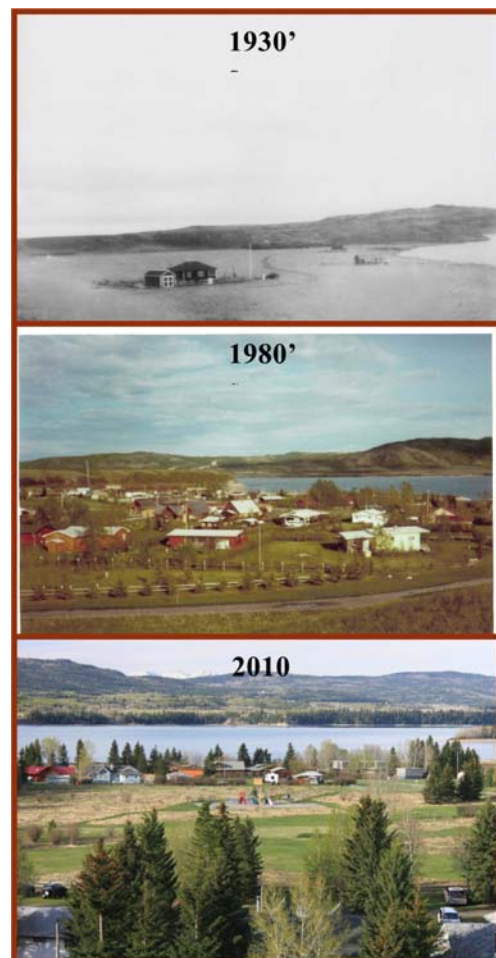
The future is not something we enter. The future is something we create. - Leonard Sweet

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- Improving understanding and trust
- Encouraging widespread ownership and commitment to action



2. Context

You've got to think about big things while you're doing small things, so that all of the small things go in the right direction. - Alvin Toffler

What is sustainability?

Sustainability is about meeting our needs today, but in a way that doesn't limit the opportunity for future generations to meet their own needs. Said another way, sustainability is about creating financial and social health and well being in ways that respect and protect the environment while satisfying the community's needs. When we talk about sustainability we often focus on three things:

- **Thinking long term.** Developing a sustainability plan allows us to get creative, consider long-term trends, issues and opportunities and identify long term strategies for moving us toward the future we want.
- **Looking at the whole.** Municipal sustainability plans address all elements of life — our natural environment, how we build our community/infrastructure, our economy, our culture, how we govern ourselves and how we connect and support one another. Understanding the municipality in this way helps us understand how we relate to our region and ultimately the rest of the planet.
- **Seeing the connections.** Things that happen in the village are all inter-linked. How we build the community influences our natural environment. How we relate to each other influences how we make decisions. Understanding these connections helps us to see the consequences of decisions, and in so doing, helps us better meet our needs as a community now and in the future.

Why is sustainability planning important?

"Municipal Sustainability Planning is an opportunity for communities to look long-term at the community they want and take the proactive steps to move there. It is an opportunity to engage citizens in a dialogue about what they value about their communities and what they want their community to look like in the future. It is an opportunity to provide an outlet for the wisdom and expertise of community members to discover innovative solutions that address social, economic, cultural and environmental challenges today while leaving a positive legacy for future generations."

*– Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, *Municipal Sustainability Planning Guide*, 2006.*

Many communities across our region are using sustainability planning to help create a brighter future. Locally, municipalities such as Canmore, Cochrane, Okotoks, Airdrie and Calgary have worked with their residents to create plans that will help their communities grow in a sustainable way. By articulating a vision and values that are important to them, communities are coming together to be intentional about creating the future they want.

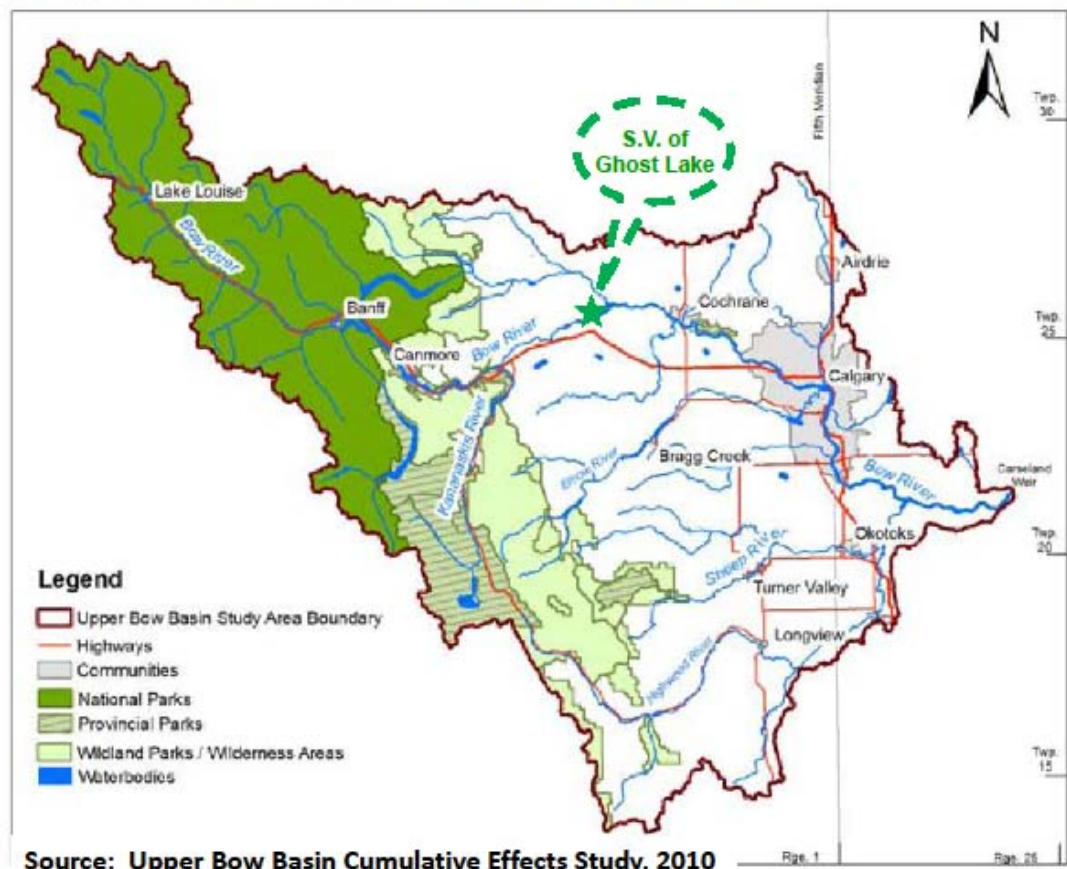
Calgary Metropolitan Plan — A Region-Wide Sustainability Vision & Framework

Given the Summer Village's location on the Bow River (Ghost Reservoir) to the west of Cochrane (See below, Map 1: Bow River Basin Context), it is part of a regional community

of municipalities in the greater Bow River watershed. Together, under the auspices of the Calgary Regional Partnership (See Map 2: Municipalities in the Calgary region, in Appendix 3) and supported by the Province of Alberta, many of these communities have worked together voluntarily since 2006 to create and approve a long-term sustainability plan for the Calgary region, entitled the *Calgary Metropolitan Plan (CMP)*. The CMP, when ultimately approved by the Province, will provide a region-wide sustainability vision and framework to which all municipalities in the Calgary region (including Summer Villages) will be required to align their municipal planning documents. Eventually, the *Calgary Metropolitan Plan* will be integrated into the Province's *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP)* and together be approved as a statement of Provincial policy.

In an age when municipalities, and regional networks of municipalities, are increasingly challenged to deliver services and guarantee healthy environments notwithstanding tight budgets, Municipal Sustainability Plans provide the tools that all communities, large and small, can use to plan responsibly and enhance their quality of life now and into the future.

Map 1: Bow River Basin Context



Developing a Community-led, Community-owned Plan

While a key objective is to develop a long-term plan for the village, it is equally important that there is widespread ownership of the plan and its implementation through extensive and ongoing Village engagement. In other words, while the SVGL Council has clear responsibilities in plan approval and implementation, villager volunteerism and participation in ensuring the vision outlined in the plan comes to fruition is just as important.

Community ownership of the plan evolves through having the opportunity to play a part in the process of its development. Villagers and other key stakeholders had the following opportunities to stay informed and get involved, providing ideas, insights and feedback:

- Fourteen villagers were appointed by Council to serve on the Sustainability Plan Working Group, which met almost monthly during 2011.
- Four workshops open to all villagers were held in summer 2010 & 2011
- Updates via Council meetings, AGM, Newsletter, e-mails and website

Seven Lessons Learned About Effective Community Sustainability Plans

Lesson 1: It's a JOURNEY, not a document

Smart plans are about the process.

Lesson 2: Invest in learning and capacity building

A small group of isolated people can't write a useful community sustainability plan. Instead, a strong core of community members and leaders need to be involved and learning together, while a broad cross section of community members needs to follow the concept, if the effort is to be sustained.

Lesson 3: Build shared intention

A strong, shared vision of what the community wants is absolutely critical. But having a well-articulated vision statement isn't enough. The most successful efforts build a shared sense of purpose, commitment and intent.

Lesson 4: Know your sustainability gap

Sustainability isn't just about how far a community has come or even where it is heading. A community needs to understand the gap between where it is today and where it wants to be in a successful, sustainable future. The tension established by this "sustainability gap" is fundamental to the creativity and innovation necessary to find new ways forward.

Lesson 5: Collaborate

Sustainability requires unprecedented collaboration among a range of disciplines, sectors, citizens and other stakeholders.

Lesson 6: Feed the momentum with strategic actions

Early wins are essential if a community is to build and maintain momentum. To achieve these incremental successes, it is important to clearly understand and communicate how actions taken today will move the community toward its vision, how they are serving as flexible stepping stones, and how they are generating a positive return on investment.

Lesson 7: Evaluate progress

As a sustainable community initiative advances, progress needs to be measured. Effective feedback mechanisms will inform decision-making, and help the community evaluate and adapt to the change process as it unfolds.

(From: *Alternatives Journal*, Volume 35, Number 5, 2009)

What is a Summer Village?

Summer villages are municipalities incorporated under the Provincial *Municipal Government Act* (MGA). Although the MGA no longer has provisions to create new summer villages, Section 89.1 makes it clear that existing summer villages must operate under the full provisions of the MGA legislation, making their administrative responsibilities (and their ability to make autonomous decisions through a local elected Council) similar to towns (like Cochrane and Canmore) and cities (like Calgary and Airdrie).

The fact that a summer village may not be formed under this Act does not affect any existing summer village, and this Act continues to apply to summer villages. (Section 89.1, MGA)

As a municipal government, summer villages (like all municipalities) exist to achieve specific municipal purposes as defined in Section 3 of the MGA, "Municipal Purposes", which reads:

The purposes of a municipality are:

- a. To provide good government*
- b. To provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of Council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of the municipality, and*
- c. To develop and maintain safe and viable communities. (Section 3, MGA)*

Unlike other municipalities in Alberta, summer villages are unique in that their Councils are required to hold their annual organizational meeting (where they appoint citizens and Council members to various municipal boards and committees) not later than August 31st (section 192(2), MGA). In election years, summer villages hold elections in the summer months, rather than in October as is the requirement for all other municipalities.

A second unique provision for summer villages is that they are the only type of municipality wherein a person may vote twice in municipal elections: once in a summer village (if they are property owners) and again in the municipality where they reside (if they do not live in the summer village itself). In all other municipalities, citizens can only vote once – in the municipality in which they reside.

Incorporated on December 31, 1953, the Summer Village of Ghost Lake is one of 51 summer villages in Alberta (See Map 3: Summer Villages in Alberta, in Appendix 3) and is an active member of the Association of Summer Villages of Alberta.

The Council of the Summer Village of Ghost Lake consists of three councilors elected at-large by the village's electorate, one of whom is selected by the Council at its annual Organizational Meeting to be the Mayor for the coming year.

All planning decisions by summer village councils must be consistent with Provincial legislation, regulations and various Provincial policy statements, such as Alberta's *Provincial Land Use Framework*, which provide broad policy statements, goals, and objectives to guide municipal land use decision makers. Councils must also consider federal interests and legislative requirements concerning fisheries and navigable waters.

Every municipality is required to enact a Land Use Bylaw to regulate very specific aspects of land development within its jurisdiction. Councils have broad bylaw-making powers and, for example, may enact provisions to minimize or mitigate the impact of human activities within the summer village on the lake environment. (From: Association of Summer Villages of Alberta, *Lake Stewardship Reference Guide*, 2006)

Regional Context & Development Trends

"There will be forces that will act on us in the future and it will be helpful to be aware of these things. It expands our view of the current reality and our future." -SPWG member

Regional Context

Various aspects of regional planning are governed and guided by Provincial legislation and related policy frameworks (e.g. *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*, *Provincial Land Use Framework*, *Water for Life Strategy*). Further expressions of these Provincial directives are emerging at the regional level, including the *Calgary Metropolitan Plan* (CMP) and the *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan* (SSRP).

As described earlier, the Calgary Regional Partnership is a voluntary association of municipalities in the Calgary region and is responsible for having created, and now implementing, the *Calgary Metropolitan Plan*. The SVGL Sustainability Plan must align with the CMP and the larger frameworks with which the CMP complies.

Additional important reference points include the *Water for Life: Action Plan* and the monitoring and reporting on Bow River water quality by the Bow River Basin Council.

Key Development Trends in the Region

- The Calgary region expects to see a **twofold increase in population by 2076**. The region (Banff to Wheatland; Crossfield to Nanton) currently has a population of 1.2 million and is forecast to grow to 2.8 million over the next 70 years.
- Most of the region's future growth will be located in Calgary and existing urban municipalities including Airdrie, Cochrane, Strathmore, Chestermere, Canmore and the Okotoks/High River corridor. Other municipalities in the region will also grow, but many face various physical and/or institutional limitations to their growth over time.
- Anticipated development in proximity to the Summer Village includes creation of a new town on the old Seebe town site upstream from Ghost Reservoir (estimated population of 10,000 – 12,000 at build out), continued growth of Cochrane (to perhaps a population of 50,000 – 70,000 by 2070) and low-density rural development in Rocky View County.
- First Nations lands (e.g. Stoney Reserve lands to the east of the Summer Village and along the south side of the Ghost Reservoir) are not bound by the CMP. Development may occur on Reserve lands, although none is anticipated in proximity to the Summer Village at this time. (See Map 4: Municipal Context Map)

- Lands to the north and west of the Summer Village lie within the Municipal District of Bighorn. Possible development in those areas is likely to be limited to country residential acreages and no development proposals are yet known for lands immediately west of the Summer Village.

Water Conservation – The Emerging Issue in our Region

- The supply, quality and protection of surface water (i.e. the Bow River) is becoming an increasingly important prerequisite and constraint for growth in the region.
- The Ghost Reservoir is an important water storage and management facility for the region; the Bow River is the primary source for the region’s drinking water.
- The Province has placed a moratorium on new water licenses being granted in the Bow Corridor; the basis for a region-wide water-sharing framework (and watershed protection approach) is a focus of the *Calgary Metropolitan Plan*.

Map 4: Municipal Context Map

----- Approximate boundaries of the Summer Village of Ghost Lake



3. Planning Approach

Key Planning Process Steps

The Summer Village of Ghost Lake has taken a community-based approach to developing this plan:

1. **Village visioning workshops (Summer 2010):** Invited Villagers and community leaders to begin the conversation about the village today and tomorrow, identifying Villager's values, vision and issues of concern.
2. **Structuring the process (Fall 2010):** Council approves proposed approach; Council appointed the Sustainability Plan Working Group (SPWG) volunteers.
3. **Understanding the sustainability gap for key sustainability topic areas:** For each topic area, the following were developed:
 - a. **A Description of Success** that describes the state of the village in the future, "*We will be successful when...*" Together, the Descriptions of Success for the various topic areas represent a more detailed articulation of the village's desired future as expressed at a high level in the vision.
 - b. **A Description of Current Reality** that outlines the current challenges and assets, "*Our strengths and challenges are...*"
 - c. **Strategies and initiatives to bridge the gap** between the current reality and the desired future as outlined in the vision and description of success
4. **Village review and revision of the draft plan** (via two village workshops in the summer of 2011)
5. **Review of Village feedback by the Working Group;** preparation of the proposed plan for Council
6. **Non-statutory public hearing** of Council to consider and approve a Village Sustainability Plan (January 2012)
7. **Ongoing action planning, volunteer recruitment and monitoring of progress** toward the vision and descriptions of success.

Co-Creating the Plan—The Role of the Sustainability Plan Working Group

Fourteen villagers volunteered to participate on a working group to develop the proposed Sustainability Plan and make recommendations to Council. The SPWG was formally appointed by Council, met monthly from January–June 2011 toward developing a *draft Sustainability Plan* and based on Village feedback over summer 2011 they met in Fall 2011 toward development of the proposed plan.

The objective of convening the SPWG was to benefit from the knowledge and insights of a representative group of Ghost Lake villagers, discuss ideas and concerns, and, ultimately, to develop a high quality sustainability plan for Council approval, that has community support, from visioning through to implementation. With the support of the planning consultant, the SPWG co-created the proposed Sustainability Plan by being actively engaged in plan development, including providing input and feedback and helping to engage and communicate with all village residents.

Villager Engagement

Villagers were invited to provide input into plan development through two workshops held in the Summer of 2010 and then were invited to review the Draft Sustainability Plan over two workshops in Summer of 2011. About 45 Villagers took part in each of the 2010 workshops. See Appendix 1 for more detail on the Village Workshops. Presentations were also made at the 2011 Village AGM.



PART B: OUR VISION AND STRATEGIES

4. Vision & Values

"How you imagine the world determines how you live in it." - David Suzuki

Our Village Vision

The people, lake and parkland are the heart of The Summer Village of Ghost Lake. We value our village way of life and together we are responsible for the stewardship of our community. We make decisions based on respect for each other, responsibility for our actions, stewardship and open participation.

We envision a community, to be inherited by our children and grand-children, that:

- Has local governance with open communication, active participation and strong ethics.
- Acknowledges and lives within our means, matching services to the financial and volunteer resources available.
- Provides appropriate services for safety, recreation, maintenance of community facilities and social activity.
- Has clear standards and guidelines that support safety and stewardship of our shared land and water.
- Actively protects and minimizes impact on the lake and the environment around us, and maintains the low-density development in our village.

The village is a friendly community that naturally fits into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

Values

- Respect
- Environmental Stewardship
- Safety
- Our village way of life — our haven on the lake
- Shared responsibility
- Locally governed

Residential lots: The village provides for single-family residential lots with policies and regulations guiding their development outlined in the Village's *Land Use Bylaw*. With few exceptions, the residential lands are already subdivided to the extent possible under the *Bylaw*; most, though not all, have a dwelling unit (house or summer cabin). As such, there is very little development capacity for additional subdivision or housing units, and the Sustainability Plan proposes maintaining this situation into the future.

Active recreation areas: Includes four developed recreation areas related to the beachfront, horseshoe pits, playground area and the sports court, boat launch and storage areas.

Golf course: A specific purpose area in the Village, for golfing and walking activities.

Treed areas: These have been identified where there are substantial clusters of trees and bushes in a predominantly natural state. This includes the natural wetland areas along the lakefront in the Village's central area and far west end.

Grassy areas: These include a combination of natural prairie grasslands and village-maintained grassy open space areas for passive recreation or visual ecological amenity. Areas of slope have been identified very generally as natural escarpments, contributing important ecological environments as well as visual amenity for villagers.

Community facilities: There are three developed facilities and areas, including the community hall/library, the boat launch/burn pile area, and the garbage/composting area.

Toward the village's west end, the map includes an historical subdivision pattern (lots and road allowance) that has never been sold or developed and is situated on land owned by the Village and used for passive park space. With approval and implementation of the Sustainability Plan, it is anticipated that these historic lots would be consolidated into the larger surrounding municipal parcel and remain as Village open space.

Finally, it should be noted that the Village, as in any municipality in Alberta, must accommodate broader public access (for all members of the general public) to certain municipal amenities (i.e. golf course, sports court, playgrounds, parks) – whether or not they are residents, property owners or guests of villagers. In fact, most of the Village's recreation facilities, including its roadways and parks, have benefited substantially from Provincial grants paid for by all Albertans. In contrast, the privately owned waterfront lands under lease from TransAlta must be secured from broader public access, excluding general access and use beyond Villagers and their guests, to ensure that the Village's obligations to maintain and oversee all activities on the leased lands can be effectively undertaken.

5. Preferred Future Initiatives & Strategies



The following sections form the strategy portion of the plan and are structured to take the reader through the process of 'backcasting' that the SPWG worked through, namely clarifying success (descriptions of success), describing the current situation (current reality) and then suggesting strategies to bridge the gap between today and the desired future, namely the vision and descriptions of success.

Strategic Areas

The SPWG identified the following topic areas to ensure a comprehensive and strategic view of the Village.

1. Municipal services and infrastructure
2. Built Environment
3. Natural environment
4. Lake stewardship
5. Communications
6. Social/village life
7. Municipal finances
8. Governance

See **Appendix 3** for the *Description of Current Reality (Assets & Challenges)* for each of the topic areas.

Municipal Services and Infrastructure

Key elements include: Roads, parks, pathways, recreation and community amenities, fire prevention and response, waste management, water and wastewater, planning/development approvals process, utilities.

Description of Success

In 2040... Our common services, facilities and infrastructure are well planned, managed and maintained.

By this time:

1. Roads are well maintained and safe for pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles alike, reflecting the size and character of existing roadways.
2. Parks, pathways and recreation facilities are serviced on a regular basis, replaced when needed and meet provincial safety standards.
3. Proactive measures are taken to prevent fires: well-equipped and trained local First Response Team, village fire education and training, fire ban communication, year round water access.
4. Convenient, secure and regular garbage and recycling services exist as well as garbage cans in recreation areas to prevent litter. Village waste facilities, compost and burn piles are safely designed and well maintained.
5. The waterfront lease with TransAlta is maintained.
6. The community hall is the social hub of the village and functions as a meeting hall, social gathering space and library in addition to storing fire equipment.
7. An area is set aside for community gardens to meet food, flowers, recreation and educational needs.
8. There are enough boat slips available for each household to have one.
9. A limited area is provided for seasonal boat, boat trailer and dock storage that is out of public view, secure and for property owners only.
10. All current infrastructure and future changes are mapped in GIS (Geographic Information System software) to support planning efforts.

Suggested Priority Initiatives & Strategies

Maintenance:

- a. **Review how we approach maintenance in the Village:** Look at best approaches (who, how, guidelines, etc.) for ongoing maintenance of our parks, roads, the waterfront, community hall, etc. as well as clarifying risks and liabilities (i.e. safety standards of equipment, insurance of operators, volunteerism).
 - Create a volunteer group and identify co-coordinators; Identify a council "portfolio" leader
 - Identify tasks to be completed; keep a clear list of upcoming volunteer work
 - Develop guidelines for operating Village equipment
 - Hire contractor to undertake maintenance/do repairs, if volunteers are unavailable or unable to provide the service needed.
 - Insure volunteers
 - Carefully consider new infrastructure as it relates to future maintenance requirements.

Fire Prevention & Response:

b. **Improve fire prevention and fire response**

- Create a group with co-coordinators who host meetings and training;
- Council should authorize a 'fire group'; Identify a council portfolio leader; Budget for equipment, training, communication; Create a Bylaw; Maintain fire contracts with Cochrane; Provide insurance and registration for volunteers and vehicles.
- Develop policies like "save the neighbours"
- Set fire bans, cut grass, etc.
- Create a plan for the burn pile
- Look into contracting Cochrane to do fire safety inspections

Roads:

- c. Develop a road plan to outline priorities regarding re-surfacing and upgrading the quality of the road surface to increase durability.
- d. Raise awareness regarding pedestrian safety and driving slowly.
- e. Look into the opportunity to create a snow removal 'angels' volunteer initiative.

Waste management:

- f. Enhance opportunities for recycling.
 - Village has an agreement with Cochrane to use their recycling depot. Inform villagers of this recycling opportunity.
 - Village has an area beside the garbage bins that could be used for recycling. Needs proper recycling bins and service set up.
 - Village bins for bottles and cans could provide revenue for activities such as Regatta.
- g. Increase awareness (e.g., via signage or communications) regarding the purpose, use and care of the compost pile and the burn pile.
- h. Screen the dumpsters by locating behind trees or plant additional trees.

Water:

- i. Investigate best practice examples of other small villages located in winter areas with regard to water and sewage — costs, availability of government grants, etc.

Amenities:

- j. Maintain the waterfront lease with TransAlta.
- k. Investigate redesigning the waterfront to accommodate enough boat slips for each household to have one. Provide area for moorage for some boats off shore.
- l. Ensure the new community hall includes space for the library as well as meeting space. Ideally, as a social hall, the building should also include washrooms and a small kitchen area.
- m. Investigate the feasibility of developing additional recreation facilities that encourage interaction (e.g., adult fitness circuit).
- n. In the future a community garden might be called for as food costs increase, etc.; requires an open area, fertile soil, access to a fresh water spring, deer fencing, etc.
- o. Investigate development of an area where dogs can run off-leash without danger of interacting with vehicles or people.
- p. Encourage weed control methods, where possible.
- q. Encourage Villagers to source renewable forms of energy (e.g., there are companies that supply renewable electricity). In the future, the production of alternative energy within the Village may be considered.

Built Environment

Key elements include: Land use; building form; streetscape and pedestrian/public environment; Lighting; Maintenance of buildings/property.

Description of Success

In 2040... The built environment supports high quality of life in the village while being sensitive to the preservation of the natural environment and lake stewardship.

By this time:

1. Village density is maintained at the current number of lots and houses, with one residence per lot, and no rental of secondary suites.
2. Village plans and bylaws that address built environment are understood by all Villagers and effectively implemented.
3. Properties are well maintained and yards are kept free of refuse.
4. Public facilities and areas include:
 - Recreational facilities (beach, golf course, multi-sport court, horseshoe pitch, fitness trail)
 - Designated green spaces and natural parks
 - Designated storage areas (RV, boats, etc.)
 - Recycling, solid waste and compost facility; and burn pile
 - Off-leash dog area
 - Public gardens
 - Break water, boat dock and moorage
 - Alternative energy facility is developed, supporting the Village to meet its energy needs.
5. Public and private lighting is minimized such that only stars and moonlight light the night sky.

Suggested Priority Initiatives & Strategies

- a. **Demonstrate our community pride by maintaining attractive public and private properties.**
 - Reconsider 'unsightly premises' Bylaw and address long term storage of vehicles
 - Communicate issues and Bylaws in the Village newsletter
 - Act on the 'good neighbour' principle and keep private property well maintained and free of refuse
- b. Bylaws will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- c. Install signage and build awareness around efforts to protect sensitive areas.
- d. Clarify and build awareness of waste management and facility guidelines.
- e. In the future investigate the feasibility of producing renewable energy in the Village.
- f. Maintain the breakwater regularly.
- g. Explore the potential of developing a fitness trail.

Natural Environment

Key elements include: The flora and fauna, grasslands, woods, shoreline, natural spring, wetlands, the breakwater lagoon, air quality, environmentally sensitive areas and areas altered by human intervention.

Description of Success

In 2040... We show respect and care for all aspects of the village environment — our clean air, park-like natural areas and green spaces provide a sanctuary on the edge of Ghost Lake for villagers, and local flora and fauna. Our ecosystems are healthy and diverse, characterized by an abundance of native species. We take a thoughtful and planned approach to development that is respectful of the wishes of the community and we use appropriate technology and environmentally responsible alternatives to accomplish tasks.

By this time:

1. We have protected natural areas within the village.
2. We regularly track a set of indicators (e.g., water and air quality, bio-diversity, etc.) to keep an eye on the health of our natural environment.
3. Villagers share responsibility and work in support of protecting and preserving natural areas and feel confident to intervene or speak up if a natural area is being compromised. We also seek advice or expertise when we need it. Villagers alter their behaviour in response to the demands of the natural environment.
4. The village has low energy needs (e.g. no street lights, etc.).
5. We have a low impact/footprint of human presence with regard to elements such as wastewater, amount of pavement/impermeable areas, old parked vehicles, etc.
6. Human-altered landscapes are as resilient as possible in the face of changes in the natural environment (e.g., drought, wind, climate change, erosion).
7. We have preserved the natural springs and manage them well.
8. Motorized vehicles are restricted to designated roadways.

Suggested Priority Initiatives & Strategies

- a. **Learn about and preserve our natural environment through development of a natural areas strategy and action plan:**
 - Create a volunteer group and identify co-coordinators to develop the strategy and action plan, monitor health of our public land and to plan activities that augment our understanding and appreciation of these areas.
 - Inventory what SVGL has and what is threatened or needs protection. Seek the advice of a professional naturalist to create an inventory of our natural spaces, to identify those areas that require special care or attention, and to assist in the education of all villagers regarding these issues. Create a written statement that defines 'natural environment'. Communicate the understandings contained in this statement to all villagers.

- Based on our enhanced understanding of how to care for our natural environment, establish expectations and guidelines regarding our use of these areas and enforce these expectations. Apply significant penalties to those who, without authority, alter and/or degrade public land. Use the services of the RCMP, when necessary, as recommended by the RCMP themselves.
 - Limit our control of weeds to those plants defined as noxious by the provincial government.
- b. Preserve the springs and manage them well.
- Test the water to bench mark the water quality.
- c. Investigate the potential benefits of creating a land trust to protect Village public lands.
- d. Include an 'environmental column' in the newsletter to provide relevant information to Villagers.

Lake Stewardship

Key elements include: Understanding of environmental standards and options for Ghost Lake to ensure that it is preserved and protected. Understanding the jurisdictions and governing bodies that impact the lake. Becoming a leader in reducing impact on the lake and its associated environs.

Description of Success

In 2040... SVGL is a leader in 'good lake stewardship' and a role model for others. SVGL is fully informed and actively participating in external conversations that concern the lake. A comprehensive environmental standard for Ghost Lake has been established that ensures the lake is clean and pristine, with healthy aquatic, avian, and shoreline animal populations with minimal signs of human impact.

By this time:

1. Ghost Lake water quality is maintained or improved;
 - It is routinely tested to determine if there are pollution problems that need to be addressed.
 - GLV septic and wastewater are effectively managed and are not adversely impacting the environment.
 - There is minimal use of fertilizers and herbicides adjacent to the lake.
 - The shoreline is stable and erosion is controlled.
 - The lake has no further increase in shoreline development.
2. Aquatic and riparian plant and animal life is preserved and improved.
3. Education and volunteerism underpin the Village's contribution to lake stewardship.
 - All villagers understand and promote the Village's lake stewardship role.
 - The public is educated in advance on the guidelines for using the lake environment so that there are minimal adverse impacts on the water and shoreline.
 - Education and experience over time allows Village volunteers to fine tune the skills required to improve the Ghost Lake ecosystem.
4. SVGL is proactive in the preservation of Ghost Lake. This means active collaboration, transparent processes and active advocacy in the wider efforts that affect Ghost Lake.
 - An effective collaborative process/structure is put in place to maintain the environmental and safety standards of the lake.

Suggested Priority Initiatives & Strategies

- a. **Develop a lake stewardship plan**
 - Create a lake stewardship committee and identify co-coordinators toward developing a lake stewardship strategy and action plan.
 - Clarify who all the local stakeholders are who share an interest in lake stewardship.
- b. Use best practices and maintenance to prevent polluting the lake (e.g., monitor the current impact of septic systems on water quality)
- c. Clarify who all the local stakeholders are who share an interest in lake stewardship.

Communications

Key elements include: Communications between villagers and Council; Communicating the Sustainability Plan to all; Communications with external stakeholders.

Description of Success

In 2040... Effective communication is happening between Council and Villagers, among Villagers and between the Village and external stakeholders and neighbours. Villagers are aware of Village plans, policies and bylaws. The Village is characterized by a high level of volunteering.

By this time:

1. Effective communication is happening between Council and Villagers, evidenced by:
 - Villagers understanding and engaging in Council matters and Village life
 - Villagers embracing this plan and acting upon it
2. Increased active Villager community volunteering
3. We have an understanding of how our plan aligns with the plans of other levels of government and jurisdictions.
4. External Stakeholders have an understanding of our Plan and its ultimate goal of sustainability for the “greater public good”.
 - Lake stewardship
 - Environmental impact
5. Everyone knows and understands the plan, key Village bylaws, standards and guidelines, and the Village events calendar.

Suggested Priority Initiatives & Strategies

- a. **Improve village communications**
 - Create a volunteer group and identify co-coordinators to develop and implement a plan.
 - Confirm villagers’ communication needs;
 - Develop options and an action plan.
 - Budget for communication tools (i.e. bulletin board, website, etc.)
 - Increase Council communication and transparency
 - Proactively seek citizen input into decisions
- b. **Improve Village emergency communications**
 - Develop an emergency ‘phone tree’ by equipping a Coordinator with a phone list
- c. The Newsletter could become a bi-monthly communication tool and people could be provided with a deadline on submissions well enough in advance to ensure that their news would make the newsletter.
- d. Develop a “Virtual Bulletin Board” that could become part of our website and something that all villagers could post to announce their news – it should also have

alphabetical categories to keep all details clear and easy to read/find what one may be interested in.

- e. Create a new neighbour welcome package and team to ensure that newcomers to the Village are welcomed and provided with information such as plans/bylaws, events and opportunities to participate in Village life.

Social/Village Life

Key elements include: Safety, respect for one's neighbours, opportunity for greater village interaction, communication about village events, responsible behaviours, welcoming new villagers, opportunities for recreation at various sites in the village, community interests, funding for community events, Regatta.

Description of Success

In 2040... SVGL will be an even more safe, respectful and responsible community than it is today. The Village is characterized by a high level of volunteering and ample opportunity for villagers to get involved, interact and play beyond the successful annual Regatta. To guests and other lakeside communities, SVGL is seen as a welcoming community.

By this time:

1. There is a strong sense of community in the Village; Villagers are familiar with one another and are willing to volunteer and lend a helping hand.
2. Most Villagers are involved in the Regatta and other Village social events in some way.
3. The community hall is the social hub of the village and functions as a meeting hall, social gathering space and library in addition to storing fire equipment.
4. Village safety education and preparedness is a priority: emergency procedures are widely understood; an effective communication system for fires is in place.
5. SVGL is a warm and welcoming community to new villagers.
6. Community events and facilities are plentiful and highly subscribed. Villagers are aware of how to fund community events. Youth are valued and actively included.
7. Villagers act responsibly with regard to noise levels and pets.
8. Ghost Lake Library is a valued village resource and remains affiliated with the Marigold Library system.

Suggested Priority Initiatives & Strategies

Regatta:

- a. Develop a binder that summarizes events as they have occurred in previous years to support volunteers in the future.
- b. More than one person should be in the drivers seat for overseeing the whole event.
- c. Continue the fireworks display, as well as collecting money for it.
- d. Create teams of people to take responsibility for portions of the regatta and assign these as far in advance as possible.

Greater Village Interaction:

- e. As plans for the new community hall develop, consideration could be given for a village cafe area where villagers could meet and put on a pot of coffee and visit.
- f. A BBQ area could be developed which villagers could use for gatherings and festivities. This would be for villagers and invited guests only.

- g. Develop a social committee that would plan other events throughout the year. Games that involve using existing facilities such as the games court, horseshoe pit and golf course could be organized.
- h. Create village gatherings that celebrate children and teens and encourage younger members of our community to get involved as they grow older.
- i. Create a sign-up sheet that would encourage as many villagers as possible to sign up for the Spring clean event.

Funding ideas:

- j. To enable villagers to contribute financially to community events, a recycling bin could be organized where bottles and other refundables could be donated to collect money for community building activities.
- k. In the Village Handbook, include a page outlining how people can get involved and contribute to Village life: this would include in-kind contributions, volunteer time, or financial contributions for 'extra' amenities such as the fireworks display, etc.
- l. Make villagers aware that a financial contribution to the Village may be claimed as a charitable donation for income tax purposes.

Safety:

- m. Hard copies of safety information should be made available to all villagers. This could be in the form of a pamphlet that villagers could place in a visible location in their Village homes.
- n. Train volunteers to be first responders. This training could involve learning how to use the defibrillator that the village owns. Consider a joint venture with Jaimieson Road inhabitants to determine a First Response Team that could help out in problems in either area.
- o. Host the St. John's ambulance for emergency response and other types of training for those that are interested in being trained.

Communication:

- p. Develop a virtual bulletin board that would be part of our Village website, which would be regularly updated and could be used as a place to post events and individual notices.
- q. Communication regarding safety issues should also be posted on line. (i.e. Emergency procedures and contact numbers)
- r. Hard copies of community events should be posted at the community hall on a specifically designated bulletin board.

Responsible behaviours

- s. Develop 'good neighbour' guidelines and standards.

Welcoming new villagers

- t. Develop a 'new neighbour welcome package' – a small gift basket with relevant information materials, an annual calendar of events for the year, contact list, etc.

Responsible pet ownership

- u. Develop signage as appropriate to remind villagers of their responsibility to clean up after their animals.

Governance

Key elements include: Role and effectiveness of Council processes; Villager expectations for communication and engagement regarding village matters; Relations with neighbouring municipalities; Mechanisms for engaging with external stakeholders; Enforcement of polices and bylaws; Council expectations regarding Villager participation, volunteering and engagement.

Description of Success

In 2040... Village governance is characterized by effective and transparent Council decision-making and processes, clear and timely two-way communication, a high level of Villager engagement and volunteerism, good relations with neighbouring municipalities and other levels of government, and voluntary adherence to Village polices and bylaws (or appropriate enforcement when needed).

By this time:

1. The Village has clear procedures in place to support effective Council decision-making, transparency and accountability, which has resulted in clear policies and open processes that are clearly understood by villagers.
2. Village priorities, as outlined in the *Sustainability Plan* and *Municipal Development Plan* are widely understood by Villagers and implemented by council.
3. Mentorship of new council members, and succession planning for the Village's contract staff, is taking place.
4. There are effective, timely, accessible and understandable communications from Council and its Administrator for ensuring Villagers' awareness of Council decisions and upcoming issues of concern to Villagers.
5. When Council seeks public input and engagement, advance notice of meetings is provided through communication channels, such as the Village website, email, and the community bulletin board.
6. There is an Inter-municipal Plan in place that protects and addresses topics such as shared environmental approaches, development around the lake, etc.
7. There is effective communication with our neighbours and their plan development (e.g., MD's of Rockyview and Bighorn, Stoney First Nation, Landowners, Cottage Club, etc.)
8. We have awareness of bylaws and effective enforcement, actioned first on a 'good neighbour' basis, with provision for legal enforcement by the RCMP.
9. We have active participation from a majority of Villagers.
10. Villagers have a clear understanding of what is reasonable to expect of their council and what the expectations are for Council as defined by the Municipal Government Act.
11. The planning and development approval process is well articulated, in compliance with all legislation and applicants pay for applications.

Suggested Priority Initiatives & Strategies

- a. Review the policy manual and update to reflect agreed upon improvements. Ensure the manual uses accessible language and is available to all.
- b. Provide Villagers a good deal of advance notice to inform them of key Village events and Council meetings. Use more than one form of communication i.e. written and phone call/visit/ poster.
- c. Ensure the Village has clear procedures in place to support effective Council decision-making, transparency and accountability.
- d. Ensure Village priorities, as outlined in the *Sustainability Plan* and *Municipal Development Plan* are widely understood by Villagers and implemented by Council.
- e. Develop an annual plan review and action planning cycle.
- f. Encourage mentorship of new council members, and succession planning for the Village's contract staff.
- g. Ensure effective, timely, accessible and understandable communications from Council and its Administrator for ensuring Villagers' awareness of Council decisions and upcoming issues of concern to Villagers.
- h. Make Council-meeting minutes available to Villagers in a timely manner.
- i. Develop an Inter-municipal Plan.
- j. Encourage effective communication with our neighbours around their plan development.
- k. Build awareness of bylaws and effective enforcement, actioned first on a 'good neighbour' basis, with provision for legal enforcement by the RCMP.
- l. Encourage active participation from a majority of Villagers.
- m. Ensure the planning and development approval process is well articulated, in compliance with all legislation and that applicants pay for expenses related to applications.

Municipal Finances

Key elements include: Annual budget; Financial Policies; Capital Funding; Records.

Description of Success

In 2040... We have an efficient and transparent municipal finance system and budget process that complies with current accounting standards and is aligned with municipal and provincial legislation. Council makes the budget available, provides opportunity for input and Villagers understand why choices have been made and a majority are in agreement with the overall plan.

By this time:

1. During the first year of Council's three-year term, Council develops a three-year business plan and budget using the *Sustainability Plan* for guidance. The end result allocates funding to functions required under governing legislation and projects (capital and operating programs) that provide the maximum long-term benefit to the community. In doing so, Council will make provision for community review and input prior to approving the Business Plan and Budget.
2. Funds are allocated consistent with the sustainability plan and vision
3. Guidelines for financial planning, tracking and reporting are effective. There are clear procedures in place for all contingencies such as borrowing money, signing authority, property taxes, risk assessments, outsourcing, and contracts etc.
4. Federal and Provincial funding is applied for whenever it is applicable and needed. There is adequate knowledge and awareness regarding when and how to obtain funding. Allocation of this capital is done in a fashion that is within government guidelines and the funding is utilized in the most efficient manner possible.
5. We have a capital reserve to replace assets and for contingencies
6. New ways of raising revenue are analyzed thoroughly before implementation (i.e. user fees); the opportunity for community review and input are provided before Council approves the creation of any new revenue mechanisms.
7. Applicants are responsible for costs incurred by the Village for requested permits or specific action by Council that does not benefit the whole village.
8. Financial records are managed according to best practices.

Suggested Priority Initiatives & Strategies

- a. During the first year of Council's three year term, develop a three year business plan and budget using the *Sustainability Plan* for guidance. Make provision for community review and input prior to approving the Business Plan and Budget.
- b. Ensure funds are allocated consistent with the *Sustainability Plan*.
- c. Develop guidelines for financial planning, tracking and reporting ensuring clear procedures for all contingencies such as borrowing money, signing authority, property taxes, risk assessments, outsourcing, and contracts etc.
- d. Apply for Federal and Provincial funding whenever it is applicable and needed.
- e. Develop a capital reserve to replace assets and for contingencies.

- f. Make applicants responsible for costs incurred by the Village for requested permits or any actions by council that do not benefit the whole village.
- g. Ensure financial records are managed according to best practices.

6. Implementation & Monitoring

Once approved by Council, the following table outlines an approach that could be used by Council and Committees of Council / Action Teams to develop more detailed actions for implementation and monitoring:

Priority Initiative # 1:				
Actions	Goals / Targets How will we know we have been successful?	Who? Key players — who is responsible and/or needs to be involved?	When? Timeline	Collaborative opportunities and/or Links to Other Actions (if applicable)