

Rocky Mountain House Community Sustainability Plan

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INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the Rocky Mountain House community started the process to prepare a community sustainability plan. This initiative was in response to increasing concerns of the impact that our daily activities and way of life has on the environment and the resources available to the community. It was also in response to broad societal interest in pursuing a more sustainable future. Part of this broad interest was in the form of encouragement by senior levels of government, encouragement by other municipalities in the form of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, and part by members of the community.

While the initiative to prepare a community sustainability plan has been spearheaded by Town Council, it is widely acknowledged that a broad interpretation of the term "community" would be used. This recognizes the many economic, social, and environmental linkages between those who choose to live in the town and those who choose to live in the area around the town.

This document, referred to as the Rocky Mountain House Community Sustainability Plan, is the result of many hours of effort by community members to chart a path towards their desired future as a more sustainable community.

What is a Community Sustainability Plan?

A community sustainability plan is a long term, broad strategic guide on how a community can manage its activities and resources with the goal of creating a more sustainable community and future. It involves the creation of a common understanding of the future the community desires. It sets out actions and priorities intended to help reach the desired future. It is intended as a guide that can be used by individual community members and their households and businesses, by community organizations, by the non-profit and for-profit sectors of the local economy, and by our local government.

The community sustainability plan does not replace the many other plans that already exist in the community. Existing plans include the Town's Strategic Plan for meeting its obligations as a local government unit and similar plans for other organizations. The community sustainability plan provides a common linkage for existing plans, future changes to existing plans and new plans that may be established. In this way it acts as an umbrella type plan that can be referred to and used by all in the community.

Moving towards the sustainable community described in this plan will take time, effort in the form of more detailed assessment, planning and development of programs, and

patience. It will also require the wise investment of resources (funding, time and volunteer effort) to implement the various actions suggested in the plan.

What is Sustainability and Sustainable Development?

Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It is about supply and demand: the increasing demand for resources and services (e.g. water, housing) in the face of limited or decreasing resources (e.g. affordable housing).

In terms of planning a community and providing services to that community, sustainable development refers to creating communities that are capable of being sustained far into the future. This means balancing the demands placed on resources in a manner that enables current and future community members to enjoy an acceptable quality of life and range of opportunities.

Sustainability refers to understanding the interconnections and continuity of economic, environmental and social aspects of human society and the non-human environment. It requires a systems approach to managing issues and making decisions

Five Pillars of Sustainability

Sustainable development is often described and thought of in terms of five pillars or dimensions. These are:

Economic - the costs of building and maintaining the community are affordable and will not become an undue burden on future generations - wealth of individuals and the community

Social - diverse community with access to affordable housing, education, health care and public amenities

Environmental - designed to minimize air, water and soil pollution, reduce land consumption and waste, and protect natural systems

Cultural - respect and enhance the cultural capital of the community in terms of its traditions, values, heritage, sense of place, arts, diversity and social history

Governance - decision making is approached in a democratic, transparent, accountable and inclusive manner to foster informed dialogue and an engaged citizenry

Every decision made for use of resources or delivery of services will involve consideration of several of these pillars. For example, a decision on public transportation policies can have social implications as much as it can have economic and environmental implications. The choices we make have an impact on the resources available as part of the natural environment and other limited resources such as financial capacity and volunteer capacity.

STRUCTURE OF PLAN AND HOW TO USE IT

This document contains several key elements that are meant to communicate the overall intent of the community's initiative to become more sustainable in as concise a manner as possible. The major elements of the document reflect the broad steps of the process that was used to create the various desires and action plans. More information about the process that was used can be found in Appendix A (note - not yet complete).

The first major element of the plan is the vision of what the Rocky Mountain House community would be like in the future as efforts are made to be more sustainable. As the community looks further into the details of how to become sustainable there will be differences of opinion on how best to proceed. The purpose of the vision is to give the community a common starting point for these discussions and a shared desire to make the vision happen.

The second major element is a series of broad topic areas. A total of fourteen topic areas were identified to further elaboration of the community's desired future and the creation of action plans. These fourteen areas appear in no particular order, following the vision.

Some topic areas contain preambles while others do not. The core content for each topic area consists of the following:

1. A more detailed description of future success building on the broad vision but specific to the topic area,
2. A summary of what is or what is perceived as the current reality or starting point,
3. A series of actions meant to move the community towards the desired future, and
4. A set of measures intended to be used in gauging progress in one or more action areas over the coming years.

The nature of sustainability means that there is overlapping considerations in any decisions and course of action. This plan presents material in several topic areas and, while an attempt has been made to avoid too much duplication, there may be some overlapping ideas. Also, thoughts and ideas may appear in one topic area even though they have potential linkage to several others. For this reason it is important to treat the plan as a "whole" rather than just focusing on the individual topic discussions.

It is important to point out that the process to prepare this plan involved many volunteers and perspectives. Research and discussions took place at a "high level" in order to capture the essence of ideas for future improvement. This means that the segments on the current reality may be more perceived than real. It also means that each of the actions laid out in the plan are not necessarily ready to go "off the shelf." In most cases, more detailed investigation, discussions with affected parties and plan or program development is required before firm commitments can be made to implement or move forward on an action.

The third major element of the plan is a discussion on implementation. This can be found after the topic areas. Some of the action items put forward may require minor adjustments to achieve and others will require a substantial commitment of resources. This section provides some guidance on where to start and how to track and monitor progress over the coming years.

OUR VISION: A SUSTAINABLE ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE COMMUNITY

It is 2035 and several years have passed since the Rocky Mountain House community launched its first initiative to create and move towards a more sustainable community. Our efforts have been guided by the five pillars of sustainability. We continue to seek a balance between the cultural, economic, environmental, and social and governance aspects of our current and long-term decisions. In short, we strive towards the following:

The Rocky Mountain House community has become a model sustainable community where current and future generations are able to satisfy their social and economic needs in an environmentally responsible manner and where community members participate in decision making and decisions are made in an open democratic manner and choices reflect our local culture.

The above broad vision statement and the future aspirations it contains are elaborated upon for each of the five pillars of sustainability as follows:

Cultural

As a gathering place for a large geographical area, people of all ages, ethnicities, education and experience are warmly welcomed within Rocky Mountain House and contribute to its vitality. Myriad places and activities celebrate and educate citizens about the grand history and culture of the area. The area's rural roots and western heritage is evident throughout providing a strong link to the past. Native involvement and history are the foundation of Rocky Mountain House's unique identity. We connect to other cultures through exchange programs. Local citizens' artistic endeavors, ranging from performing arts to the fine arts, add a distinct flavor to the community. In addition, the town serves as a gathering point for adventure-filled activities in the surrounding region.

Economic

The community emphasizes use of local area services and purchases locally sourced goods to support its own citizens. Many people live, work, and shop in Rocky Mountain House and surrounding area. Commercial activities congregate around a vibrant and attractive downtown. While the economy remains driven by agriculture, forestry, and oil & gas, diversification opportunities are continually being pursued. Recreation and tourism continues to grow in importance as people from the surrounding regions and beyond discover opportunities to experience the culture and outdoor activities that are available in and around the town. Emerging trends in environmentally friendly development and renewable energy sources are embraced by the community as both an

economic tool and a better way of living. The commitment to these new practices encourages forward thinking individuals and professionals from a variety of disciplines to come and live in Rocky Mountain House.

Social

There is a strong sense of community pride within Rocky Mountain House. Safety, health and social needs are attainable for all and a variety of high quality services and programs address the needs of citizens from all demographic, spiritual and cultural backgrounds. Resources are shared and the community's commitment to sustainable living attracts a broad variety of people dedicated to giving back to the community. Accessible gathering places, both indoor and outdoor, promote the sharing of ideas and opportunities to get know others in the community.

Environmental

Rocky Mountain House's development practices foster a compact form in an aesthetically pleasing manner with a variety of parks and trail that link residential areas with commercial, industrial and institutional uses. In each new development and within existing areas, whether residential, commercial, industrial or institutional, we have minimized our ecological footprint. As a result, a pedestrian and public transit-friendly atmosphere throughout all seasons has been created. The town's proximity to agricultural land fosters development of locally grown food while more compact development preserves those agricultural areas. The energy needs of the community are increasingly met through renewable sources such as wind, solar and geothermal. Best practices have moderated the demand for water in spite of a growing population. Our generation of solid waste has been reduced.

Governance

Local decision-makers seek out the opinions of all stakeholders in order to make informed decisions. Criteria for decisions emphasize impact on local citizens and the pillars of sustainability. Decisions made by outside authorities take into account input from local citizens. Youth are educated about the process of decision-making and contribute their opinions in preparation for their future leadership roles. By involving citizens in decisions at an early age they will take ownership of those decisions and in turn develop a positive and long-lasting attachment to the community.

ENVIRONMENT

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

1. To see a considerable reduction in the use of landfill to an optimum of no landfill
 - (a) by a decrease in consumption
 - (b) by an increase in reuse
 - (c) by an increase in recycling

2. To maintain existing areas and events while enhancing their "green" component
 - (a) Develop more green spaces as the need arises
 - (b) Maintain "view" areas—(i.e. looking west, south from Main Street, etc with backdrop of the mountains)
 - (c) Encourage more "green events" and behaviour/choices that reduce the use of non-renewable material and resources

3. To have a revised user pay system for water users so users are paying a price that reflects this valuable resource. This needs to be a reality, but with a concern for the low-income population
 - (a) Use of grey water and collection of rainwater in cisterns for domestic, non-drinking purposes
 - (b) Composting toilets/electric toilets (flaming toilets) a new "norm"
 - (c) Purple pipe (reclaimed, non-potable water - use of grey water) technology a possibility

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. Landfills are used and are presumably cost effective. We have good systems for recycling (Bottle depot, Next to New, etc.)

2. We currently have many green spaces. Also, park areas with some "green space", particularly in the North end of the town

3. Meters, monitoring of water use occurring now

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. Encourage and promote more environmentally friendly and conscious behaviour by:
 - (a) Encouraging composting by the private sector and providing public shared composting facilities
 - (b) Putting in place user pay systems (e.g. garbage collection) and ensuring current user pay systems have differential rates that reflect usage and environmental impacts
 - (c) Phasing out use of plastic bags
 - (d) Encourage vehicle washing practices that reduce water use and run off of cleaning agents into water bodies and water courses
 - (e) Encourage use of "green" products and practices in snow and ice control
 - (f) Continuing rebate on low flush toilets and look at expanding to efficient shower heads, faucets, on demand hot water systems or similar water saving features
 - (g) Exploring Town purchase of a large quantity of rain barrels to be sold at cost to encourage use of rainwater for outdoor watering needs
 - (h) Encouraging local greenhouses to be part of a program for recycling plant pots
 - (i) Promoting Town tap water as the environmentally responsible and economic alternative to bottled water
 - (j) Exploring a "no idling" concept with signs (i.e. this is a no idling area) around public areas or high use areas (i.e. recycling depot, post office, etc.)
 - (k) Moving to bi-weekly (truck comes around every second week) garbage collection
 - (l) Encouraging the use of clotheslines through a possible "free clothes line" promotion and education campaign
 - (m) Encouraging garage sales and running the Swap Tent two times a year with a view to making this a permanent feature in our solid waste management options

 2. Keep current on new and improving ways to reduce environmental impacts and costs and explore areas of improvement by:
 - (a) Constant research by town operators/governance persons for updated technologies that could be used to reduce the community's impact on the natural environment (e.g. possibility of composting cardboard, using waste in energy generation)
 - (b) Accessing community service time/space through local media as part of an overall education/communication campaign on environmental practices and issues
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3. Provide education to inform decision makers of the current expense of some technologies, the intrinsic value of being more "green" and those technologies and approaches which could be a total cost reduction into the future
4. Encourage consideration of the long term operational costs and environmental costs when making capital investment decisions
5. Celebrate local environmental practices of private persons, community organizations and public officials and encouragement of current and new green events that promote environmental awareness (i.e. I shop at Next to New, etc.)
6. Take a more natural and environmentally friendly approach to the landscaping and design of private and public spaces by:
 - (a) Enhancing existing park areas with shrubbery, trees, and shaded sitting areas
 - (b) Encouraging the use of plantings that are edible greenery (i.e. fruit trees, berry bushes, etc.) to encourage wildlife diversity and bird populations
 - (c) Planting more trees to create tree lined streets and introducing programs to encourage planting trees on private lands (e.g. cut a tree - required to plant a tree elsewhere)
 - (d) Designing storm ponds with wetland areas and vegetation
 - (e) Using mulch in planting beds and encouraging the use of less water dependant planting materials and techniques
 - (f) Leaving buffers and filters around water bodies and water courses
7. Encourage "green events" through the following:
 - (a) Fee structures that favour those who reduce their impact on the environment (e.g. reusable materials, no plastic and paper disposables)
 - (b) Organization and Town policies requiring consideration of environmental impact of events
 - (c) Locations selected based on ability to use alternative, non-motorized transportation to reach venue

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. Amount of treated municipally supplied water used per capita
2. Amount of materials sent to the landfill per capita
3. Number of buildings with "green" features used in their design and construction

FOOD

We all like to eat. Access to healthy and economical food options is a basic necessity for the existing and future residents of our community. The production of food is also a key pillar in our local economy. Growing, preparing, partaking and sharing ideas around food are all part of one of the paramount forms of social interaction that takes place in a community.

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

1. Farmers Market / Organic Food Options
 - (a) Location
 - (b) Organic produce, canned / fresh
 - (c) Working with local greenhouses to produce during off months
 - (d) Building a outside / inside facility ($\frac{1}{2}$ & $\frac{1}{2}$)
 - (e) Having new memberships easy to get
 - (f) Having certified organic food inspectors to do the leg work for the regulations on the food, so the member doesn't have to
 - (g) Being part of a circuit with the other farmers markets so we do not all have them on the same day
 - (h) Public transportation available if farmers market is located out of town

 2. Community Garden
 - (a) Large enough to meet the needs of everyone who wishes to have a garden plot with room to expand as interest increases
 - (b) Raised gardens to help with senior access
 - (c) Tiered levels - grow up not out
 - (d) Possibility to sell produce to sustain garden costs, seeds etc...
 - (e) Knowledgeable people on site to answer questions & share info
 - (f) Encourage participation from Aboriginal Community
 - (g) Resources provided by the Town (e.g. rotor tiller and bulk deliveries of manure or compost) to be shared amongst participants

 3. 100 Mile Diet/Local Food
 - (a) Retail restaurants partnering with organic suppliers/growers to make affordable produce
 - (b) Encourage individuals to buy local and have organic / fresh lifestyles
 - (c) Encourage local businesses/growers to supply & educate the consumer on organic foods
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- (d) Government local/provincial/federal help
4. Lords Food Bank
 - (a) Fresh produce section
 - (b) Having a private Entrance/Exit facility
 - (c) Government & private businesses could help more - \$
 - (d) Population growth = more access to food & soup kitchens
 5. Collective Kitchen
 - (a) Create a community kitchen using existing facilities that is available to all community members and has a mandate to promote healthy economical choices in meal preparation
 - (b) Training teams to go out and educate others at these facilities
 - (c) This is another area where the Aboriginal peoples could teach their culture
 6. Less Dependency on Grocery Stores to feed us
 - (a) A facility such as a packing plant for farmers and other organic growers could use to pack their produce to sell at the farmers markets
 7. Meals on Wheels
 - (a) Promote 100 mile diet/local food
 - (b) Support meals on wheels so that they may grow and continue into the future

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. We have an established Farmers Market that would benefit from increased participation from local and out of town vendors
2. We have local U-pick Farms (Berries), local Buffalo producers and local Beef producers
3. While we do not have a permanent community gardens we have started our first pilot site
4. No promotion on the 100 mile diet/local food and information on local food is available but limited (e.g. Ravenwood Store in Caroline specializing in locally and naturally grown meats)
5. We have no information or lists of producers/suppliers for organic or non-organic food

6. We have a *Great Food Bank* but food insecurity does exist in our community (not having access to healthy fresh food)
7. We have two soup kitchens - they are limited, one is open on Wednesday lunch , and the other is open on Friday lunch
8. Nazarene Church holds a collective Kitchen that educates and helps many different people with cooking meals
9. We depend on the grocery stores to feed us
10. There is a huge need for improvement for organic & locally grown foods!

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. **Farmers Market**
 - (a) Sit down & meet with the executive/manager of the Farmers Market and brainstorm possibilities and what they think
 - (b) Send out a survey to the public to get ideas as to where they see the farmers market in 25 years
 - (c) Meet with the producers, the Lords Food Bank, & local Greenhouses to see their ideas on the farmers market
 - (d) Meet with municipality on the facility & location
 2. **Community Garden**
 - (a) Promote the provision and use of one or more community gardens and gardening generally including such practices as permaculture
 - (b) Meet with municipality & related organizations on locations/information
 - (c) Explore use of existing gardens or areas on private lands that aren't being used (e.g. rent them out to others such as Seniors lodges)
 3. **100 Mile Diet/Local Food**
 - (a) Showcase the 160 km/100 mile diet by cataloguing and communicating the options and possible menu choices available within this distance of Rocky Mountain House
 - (b) Develop a list of growers / suppliers
 - (c) Develop a list of retailers who offer locally produced food and encourage local retailers to expand their offerings of locally produced food
 - (d) Introduce the two lists to each other & make partnerships
 - (e) Bringing awareness into the community (Schools, community kitchen, soup kitchen, meals on wheels, etc.
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- (f) Set up a bulk purchase club for items and produce not readily available in the community
 - (g) Encourage and support local producers by allowing farm gate sales
 - (h) Promote workshops on growing food and food preparation techniques such as food storage, canning and freezing, meal planning using local food
4. Lords Food Bank
- (a) Send them a survey or meet with them on their vision
 - (b) Partner with organic growers
 - (c) Work closer with the Lords Food Bank
 - (d) Handicap accessible, private Entrance/Exit
 - (e) Encourage other food suppliers to donate useable foods rather than sending to the landfill

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. Food security for all residents in Rocky Mountain House and Clearwater County is achieved. By this we mean, access to fresh healthy food at costs within reach of the majority of household incomes
2. The local food bank meets the community needs by having a surplus of available food

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

1. Vibrant commercial areas featuring individually owned businesses and having an aesthetically pleasing and attractive appearance
2. All the businesses on Main Street not only pay into the Business Revitalization Zone but actively participate in it
3. New directional signage for Main Street
4. Public transportation for the community
5. More walking trails to every business. Promote health & Shopping!
6. Ample parking for large vehicles on service roads and parking opportunities
7. Council is financially supporting upgrades to store fronts
8. Diverse industry to support the other major industries in the community
9. All seasons Rocky - Nordegg Trail to be a major draw for the community
10. Creation of a multi-use facility for indoor and outdoor arts and cultural events
11. North Saskatchewan River Park to host local events as well as world class events
12. Remaining historic buildings preserved for future generations

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. We have a down town group called the Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ) who does the hanging flower baskets/Christmas lights on the light posts. Approximately 80 businesses on Main Street that pay in to the BRZ but only 10% participate in initiatives
2. There is lack of smaller sized (1000-1500 sq ft) retail space downtown

3. We have some green spaces along Main Street, ex. Centennial Park and Bi-Centennial Park. We do not have a central gathering area. People have suggested a nice park in the middle of town to be used as a picnic area for visitors and town folk
4. Main street has no theme
5. We have some available industrial lots , but lack development of new lots - Privately owned and developed
6. We do not have a diverse industry. The oilfield industry is large
7. Alberta has overseas offices for Alberta Economic Development A.E.D. Rocky has with investment profiles available to promote the community provincially and internationally
8. We lack something to offer in town. We offer the West Country. Other communities offer water slides, train rides theatres etc.
9. There is going to be future development of the Rocky - Nordegg Trail
10. Main Street is on a hill. This makes it very difficult for the elderly, handicap, and mothers with strollers
11. Higher volume of big trucks coming through town is causing congestion. Parking for these trucks is hard to find on service roads and such
12. Some Rocky businesses promote shopping locally by providing chamber gift certificates, co-op equity checks, Sobeys points, etc
13. Community has a lack of recognition for history. Downtown has a few buildings that are historical that could be gems
14. Community hosts many events that bring many people to town. These include: Parade of lights, Northern Crossing theatre and concert performances, Von Hollen's house of lights, David Thompson Days, Trade Show, Rodeo, Canada Day, Parade, baseball tournaments are very active, Classic Car Club Father's Day shoot out race, Air Show, Loggers Competition, Demolition Derby, and many others
15. The Town has talked about an economic River Park / Agri. Complex, a multiuse facility that will host a wide range of events

16. The Town has added lights on the water tower to light it up

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. Tourism becoming as much a part of the economy as oil and gas in regards to employment in the community
2. Theme attraction in the community (e.g. Museum, Visitor Centre Building Looking Like A "Fort")
3. Encourage subdividing larger retail spaces for smaller enterprises/businesses and exploring the potential of an "Investors Rental Building" (create a small business starter program offering low rent for space and startup incentives for a fixed term)
4. Maintain existing and consider creation of more public gathering space in the downtown area using parks, street boulevards and possible squares/plazas
5. Explore the possibility of larger sidewalks with easier accessibility along Main Street and the creation of mid street crossings for seniors, strollers, handicapped use etc.
6. Secure more foot traffic on main street, by possibly closing street to vehicle traffic during peak seasons and special events
7. Educate business community in regards to the importance of a theme and how it unifies the downtown core
8. Town could offer financial incentive to support business if a unified look/theme was established - eg. Facia boards, awnings, doors, signage
9. Encourage more diverse industry. Lack of development wouldn't be an issue
10. Supporting Rocky to Nordegg Trail and encourage ways to improve our tourism - eg more partnerships with Travel Alberta and existing tourism operators
11. Promote our community in any possible way to draw tourism to the area
12. Community support to form a historic group to identify historic buildings and working with town to protect buildings - ie. Develop standards or bylaws if necessary

13. Increase support for local business by encouraging the public to shop local
14. In regards to future development for highway commercial corridor consider parking of big trucks, the possibility of larger service roads like south Tim Horton's, and the possibility of service roads being one way
15. Consideration of a ring road that is user friendly for heavy traffic and other methods to eliminate congestion on main corridor through town
16. Development of the North Saskatchewan River Park to increase economic development and tourism opportunities in the community

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. Number of people purchasing goods and services in the community
2. Number of entrepreneurs/small business established in community
3. Diverse industry to encourage young people to stay in the community
4. Rocky - Nordegg Trail to be recognized as a tourist destination
5. Community reports high usage of public transportation and trail system to access local business
6. A unified look/theme downtown
7. Community hosts a number of large scale events
8. Fewer complaints regarding lack of parking for large vehicles
9. Rate of employment in the local area

HOUSING

"Community development happens from within a community; it does not happen to a community."

- Jason D. Brown

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

Adequate and secure housing is a fundamental part of empowering individuals to take control of their own lives and their own development, both individually and collectively. Success would be defined as providing attainable, secure and adequate housing for all members of the community. This means meeting the needs of many household types and personal preferences. It also means encouraging housing that is flexible enough to meet changing needs of households and residents over time.

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. Strengths
 - (a) Beautiful communities
 - (b) Good job opportunities - leading to developments
 - (c) Recent economic boom

2. Gaps
 - (a) Attainable housing for low-income families and single parent families
 - (b) Seniors - lack of attainable and accessible housing
 - (c) At - risk populations - homeless, mentally ill and disabled
 - (d) Low vacancy rate for rentals, as well as poor diversity of rental units

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. Seek to provide affordable and decent housing in mixed neighbourhoods (mixing duplexes amongst newer, more expensive homes creates feelings of inclusion)

2. Be proactive, not reactive & advocate for community housing needs

3. Provide public information about plans for inclusive housing areas and social benefits of designing housing areas with a variety of housing forms

4. Act upon the recommendations in the "Affordable Housing Community Needs Assessment - 2008", including:
 - (a) Researching and utilizing available housing programs (e.g. Housing First, Habitat for Humanity, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation)
 - (b) Providing for a homeless shelter, emergency shelter & transitional housing
 - (c) Establishing a housing foundation or similar organization for the community
 - (d) Lobbying the Federal and Provincial governments to be more active participants and partners in achieving attainable housing

5. Ensure planning and design of housing considers seniors:
 - (a) Be aware of demographic
 - (b) Independent and dependant living
 - (c) Encourage Home Care/assisted living
 - (d) Provide diversity in housing
 - (e) More rentals

6. Advocate for stricter regulations about maintaining rental properties (installing more efficient heating systems etc.)

7. Encourage more rental properties - apartment, duplexes, single family dwellings, secondary residences and suites (this will force landlords to discriminate less when choosing who to rent to - against families with children, pets etc.)

8. Create easy access to Landlord and Tenant Act for both parties and continue education

9. Encourage the development of housing that encourages inclusion of people with disabilities

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. Continue to assess community for their needs through needs assessments and surveys (e.g. compare vacancy rate and housing prices from year to year)

2. Inventory and evaluate housing needs with community members and agencies

SOCIAL SUPPORTS

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

Rocky Mountain House's success in regards to social supports is based on the premise of identifying the community's needs, organizing to meet those needs by working with people on a local level and then promoting active participation. Meeting the needs of the diverse population in the community depends on collective problem-solving, self-help and empowerment. It is important that the community continues to meet the needs of the different socio-economic groups as well as continues to work towards filling the gaps that exist in meeting the needs of the at-risk population. Just as importantly Rocky Mountain House should celebrate their successes with regards to the tremendous amount of resources and supports they have established in the town; through the dedication of community members who believe that community strength is determined by diminishing inequities and restoring quality of life for all members.

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. Strengths
 - (a) Strong support for family activities
 - (b) Tremendous amount of resources and supports for whole community
 - (c) Very active community members and volunteers
2. Gaps
 - (a) Not enough supports and resources for the rising immigrant population
 - (b) Very limited number of addiction supports and counsellors, which does not currently meet the needs of the community
 - (c) No emergency shelter or temporary places for persons who are homeless to stay
 - (d) Lack of adequate services for the physical, emotional, psycho-social and financial needs of some of the at-risk populations

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. Develop more supports and resources for immigrants
2. Lobby senior levels of government for additional addictions counselors and supports

3. Attract volunteers through incentives and appreciation and establish a "volunteer bureau" where individuals willing to volunteer can be matched up with organizations looking for volunteers
4. Improve communication and cooperation between service providers to increase knowledge of available services and reduce fragmented delivery of services
5. Maintain and improve services for at-risk populations
6. Continue and increase education and awareness of social stigmas in community
7. Encourage collective problem solving, self-help and empowerment
8. Continue to work with people on a local level and promote increased active participation

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. Survey community and service agencies regarding quality of life issues
2. Evaluate and compare relevant crime statistics year over year

LEARNING AND AWARENESS

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

1. In 2035, all residents have accessed or can access educational opportunities to maximize their educational potential
2. In 2035, Rocky & surrounding area will have a website that will be super-interactive through hyperlinks; you will be able to:
 - (a) Look up information on all programs (Educational, Business, Awards, Wellness, Administration, Laws & By-laws, Recreation, etc.)
 - (b) Directly input your comments, concerns, feedback onto a blog
 - (c) Vote on-line with regards to plebiscites, elections
 - (d) The website could be set up with all strategy areas (Transportation, Food, etc...)
3. In 2035, Rocky & surrounding area will have a space (outdoor/indoor) learning compound. It will be a P3 (private-public-partnership) effort as housing could be sold / space could be rented by people wanting to use facilities (artists, musicians, corporate training, fitness/wellness, lectures, education courses, workshops). Use the holistic approach to include all interest groups
4. In 2035, Rocky & surrounding area will have non-formal activities (group & individual) for people of all ages that will be inexpensive; inclusive and multi-generational
5. In 2035, Rocky & surrounding area will promote learning about failure & risk (essentially Life Skills) and how to make failure & risk work in life as a helpful learning opportunity
6. In 2035, Rocky & surrounding area will have reasonable insurance rates or NO litigation/liability issues...An 'Insurance-Free Zone'
7. In 2035, Rocky's (& surrounding area) kids and adults will be healthier! Rocky & surrounding area is participating in the 100-mile diet philosophy where the community is encouraged to select healthy choices

8. In 2035, Rocky and surrounding area will have access to recipes & menus from the 100-mile diet on our super-duper website that will include: What to cook tonight; comparison shopping; calories burned...etc

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. Adults with families want to learn/attend local educational institutions for more than upgrading; limited opportunities for children (high school grads) to stay in Rocky to learn (economical to stay at home)
2. Currently, the community has a fragmented awareness of what Rocky currently has available in terms of wellness and education; many fragmented sites & links that cause confusion & frustration when looking for information on Rocky & area issues & opportunities
3. Currently, there are many formal team sports & school activities that are expensive and time consuming and full of participants; there are few 'wellness/fitness' opportunities for children, teenagers & adults to participate in non-formal or individual pursuits and/or group activities
4. Currently, many children, teenagers & adults are 'passing' without fulfilling basic school/work requirements resulting in people not learning how to fail (and how to grow from the experience)
5. Currently, many residents are battling with diabetes, hypertension & obesity somewhat due to poor (easy) food choices; there is no shortage of 'easy to eat' fast or processed pre-cooked food laden with sugars, fats and sodium levels

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. Investigate learning technologies from post-secondary training and educational institutions and explore ways of providing less formal educational opportunities
2. Establish and commit resources to create and maintain an up to date website devoted to help community members:
 - (a) Find out about formal and informal educational opportunities
 - (b) Find out about health and wellness opportunities and resources available locally

- (c) Engage in online discussions about community related issues and offer advice to each other
 - (d) Find out about local services, events and upcoming activities
 - (e) Gain knowledge about health issues through such tools as aging/weight gaining software so someone could 'see' how they would look with diabetes/obesity/hypertension
3. Encourage school boards to include health, nutrition and fitness in the curriculum for all grade levels to build in and teach good health habits
 4. Encourage combining student programs with community wide programs such as community member and students in the same physical education class or sessions on life skills such as financial management
 5. Partner with organizations (e.g. Health Unit Nurses) to look at instruction and education of nutrition & fitness & wellness including classes for new parents informing them how to ensure healthy, fit babies, toddlers & beyond

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. Monitor statistics of the new website related to use and content (e.g. number of hits, growth in content)
2. Interest in community affairs and activities
3. Community participation and interest in either teaching or learning new games, activities, writing, arts, crafts, etc
4. Healthier children and adults and less nutrition-related diseases in Rocky

GOVERNANCE

Governance is concerned with how the community makes decisions about the various issues it confronts and how it uses its resources. It is about community participation in collective decisions.

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

1. In 2035, there is routinely broad based participation by citizens in the decisions made in and by the community through local government and community groups and organizations
2. In 2035, Rocky will have a Youth Council that works with the Town council to bring forward the Youth perspectives with regards to town initiatives; it is part of a Youth Initiative Program that encourages and fosters youth leadership, governance & decision-making
3. In 2035, Rocky Town Council will have a sitting Junior council member that will be elected by their peers
4. In 2035, Alberta will have a combined / unified Association that represents the urban AND rural population rather than the AUMA (Alberta Urban Municipalities Association) and the AAMD&C (Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties). This unified association will be a powerful lobby voice because of the increased numbers & interests
5. In 2035, there are many volunteers contribution to the community in a multitude of ways

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. Today, youth aren't interested, encouraged, or involved in governance creating a continuing voter apathy; youth aren't invited or included in the governance processes
2. Today, there is no clear avenue of participation in the governance process

3. Currently 2 separate associations / bodies representing rural & urban populations resulting in a split vote & split voice & split money coming into the municipality / area from the province; There is a possibility of creating animosity due to this splitting of associations
4. Volunteers are in constant demand and sometimes face barriers to being able to make meaningful contributions to their community

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. Focus on the development of future leaders and engaged citizens through extra-curricular programs and credit courses offered to youth in the areas of governance, leadership, politics, decision-making - led by local politician - could include invitation to town/county council meetings - could include establishing a youth forum in partnership with schools and school boards
2. Support the initiative to establish a unified association that can be a strong voice for all Alberta municipalities in their dealings with the Province
3. Hold candidate forums and create training opportunities for those interested in leadership roles in the community (e.g. National Coaches Certification provides general training which is cost shared)
4. Support and encourage broad based volunteer participation by:
 - (a) Petitioning the government to take a meaningful stand on the cessation of nuisance and vexatious litigious activities against well-meaning people and organizations volunteering in the community
 - (b) Recruiting volunteers as young as possible and making volunteering part of the school curriculum from an early age through to high school credit courses in community development
 - (c) Inclusive decision making in the structure and operation of organizations and events that rely on volunteers
5. Increase broad participation with local government
6. Foster an understanding of the complex nature of some decisions faced by the community and the need to place the interests of the greater community ahead of those of any one group or individual through communication and dialogue (e.g. address NIMBY issues through facts and open discussion)

7. Encourage and facilitate partnerships where possible in the delivery of services and programs coupled with a regional or community at large perspective; provide tools in building partnerships and resolving differences of opinion (e.g. mediation)

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. Number of people voting in local elections
2. Number of candidates running for municipal /provincial & federal elections
3. School boards offering a Civics course in high schools for credit
4. Attendance at political and public forums
5. Number of active volunteers

ARTS

Fine, applied and performing arts are alive and well in Rocky & area. We foster and encourage music, drama and dance, arts and crafts guild- painting, sculpture, pottery, photography, carving, weaving, quilting, artisan and studio tour film-making, etc. The arts enable us to express our values/traditions and how we are unique.

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

1. Rocky is known as a vibrant tourist destination for its artistic activity which has created a flourishing and diverse local arts-based economy having a wide range of jobs and training for artisans to hone their crafts and skills
2. A key ingredient has been the multi-purpose Centre for Fine and Performing Arts where:
 - (a) A wide range of artists network and share ideas and perspectives
 - (b) A director/coordinator for the Arts sector works to coordinate groups, events, programs, activities and festivals
 - (c) Members of the community and visitors can access opportunities for creative expression and the many and diverse kinds of programming provided by well-trained people
 - (d) There are opportunities for expression through a variety of art forms (visual, dramatic, musical, etc.) and opportunities for the public to view and participate in cultural events
 - (e) The needs of the artistic community are met through sharing and coordination of resources
 - (f) Available space is designed with sharing, flexibility and adaptability in mind to respond to changing and future programming needs
3. Rocky Mountain House hosts music, drama and dance festivals, and local festivals of all kinds (e.g. folk, jazz, Celtic, Highland, and Aboriginal celebrations)
4. Widespread participation in the arts has helped foster a harmonious & inclusive community built on tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, backgrounds, abilities and beliefs

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. Spaces, facilities and programs are scattered through out the town in the form of home studios, school programs, town facilities such as the library and community centre and private venues; Town has assessed the current and future needs in the Community Needs Assessment
2. We have a wide range of artistic endeavors alive and well in the community including choirs, recitals (piano, violin, voice, dance), private sector lessons at home for a variety of the arts, children's programs both during the school year and over the summer
3. There are many and varied artists and musicians in Rocky, but not all people are aware of them
4. We have a strong fine and performing arts population in the community with a strong commitment; there are many doers and watchers, the arts are well supported
5. There are pockets of activity with little communication and coordination between them; groups and organizations administer their own programs
6. Most public facilities are not designed specifically for arts programs, so artists find some of them difficult to use
7. We do have a joint use agreement with elementary and junior high however there appears to be a lack of cooperation with the use of the facilities at St Dominic's, St. Matthews and West Central High School

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. Formulate an action plan specifically for the arts with a view to creating an Arts Centre to provide a home for the arts; consult stakeholders for their input of their needs; consult and compare with other facilities in other towns; spaces need to be designed for specific needs and uses of today and tomorrow; seek expertise of operation of other arts facilities (what does and does not work); prepare concept plans ready for future stages of expansion; justify decisions by surveying the community

2. Create an Arts Board to oversee the arts in the community; find a body of people (i.e. persons, groups and organizations) with vision and drive to build and sustain a home facility for the Fine and Performing Arts
3. Hire a coordinator who seeks out and promotes dynamic programming; provide a wide range of arts activities for people of all ages and abilities; Arts and Culture Coordinator is well qualified and well paid so as to infuse energy and knowledge and organization into the arts
4. Foster broad participation in the arts by making arts facilities and programs open and accessible to all ages and abilities providing equal opportunities for creative expression
5. Increase exposure of youth to art activities to get them involved for the future (e.g. reduce the fees they pay)
6. Encourage a high quality, well designed built environment for arts activities and make art a part of the overall built environment of the community through sculpture and similar displays

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. Number of people actively involved and participating in arts programs and related events
2. Usage of arts facilities
3. Number of opportunities for expression through a variety of art forms (visual, dramatic, musical, etc.)
4. Number of opportunities for the public to view and participate in cultural events

RECREATION

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

1. Recreation facilities are managed on a life-cycle basis to ensure the Town's existing assets are preserved for long term enjoyment
2. Recreational facilities have been updated to reduce energy costs; increase facility use by a wider variety of user groups; have the facilities to host a larger variety of events to bring in user groups from other communities
3. The community hosts many major recreational events and provides a diverse range of recreational diverse and affordable opportunities and activities for people with varying abilities and interests
4. Community members are informed and knowledgeable about the various opportunities available through a variety of communication techniques
5. Active living is a key part of the recreation experience as many residents take part on sports, healthy living and increased activity such as use of an expanding and well connected series of trails and bike paths
6. Recreation areas combine with and help preserve key natural areas

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. Have many facilities including: swimming pool; twin arenas; 1 football/rugby field (school); bike/ walking path; 5 baseball fields plus those at some of the schools; 4 usable rectangular school fields; paths that are cleaned for winter and summer use
2. Community hosts many recreation type events including: sporting events; team sports like hockey, baseball, soccer, rugby; rodeo; karate, yoga, tai chi, tae Kwando, gun club; FCSS Challenge Day; dance classes
3. The Community Needs Assessment shows in an overall comparison with other communities similar to Rocky that there is a lack of commitment in the next generation; we don't have continuity for future programming

4. Affordability of recreation programs is an issue for members of the community; not everyone can access expensive programs; Jump Start is available to sponsor programs for youth who are recommended for financial reasons
5. Does not appear to be much co-operation between the user groups, Town and County, school divisions to ensure the needs are being analyzed and subsequently met
6. Town publishes an annual program guide to communicate the facilities and programs that are available; Mayor's Awards recognize contributions;
7. Some facilities are old and inefficient and in need of re-investment; gaps in the range of facilities provided
8. Operational programs and practices are in place such as: winter ice control; garbage collection and washroom maintenance; doggy do bags available along paths; recycle & reuse programs - bottles and tires on the playgrounds

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. Work with the information from the Community Needs Assessment to plan for future facilities and locations. This includes creating multi-use space with outdoor and indoor facilities capable of flexible use and meeting the needs of a diverse range of activities and groups. It also includes maintaining and upgrading the community's existing recreation assets
2. Continue to host and provide for a wide range of events and recreation activities and expand activities across all seasons. This may include:
 - (a) Community has a "First Night" where we have a variety of arts & recreation activities that participants can move from one to another (e.g. skating, curling, hockey, arts activities, bonfire)
 - (b) More regular Community events (e.g. Scavenger Hunts, Family Challenge, Fun Special Olympics)
 - (c) Annual Sports Night for the community to come together and participate in different activities without cost. Different sports groups promote their clubs and give out information to the public to get higher enrollment
3. Expand marketing and promotions efforts to make it more known to user groups and individuals what is available and how to promote their use of the facilities by:
 - (a) Having a more interactive website to communicate needs and available programs/resources

- (b) Welcoming newcomers through the welcome wagon and matching families with newcomers to encourage their participation
 - (c) Recognition of contributions and success through local media and prizes/awards
 - (d) Continued promotion in the newspaper, program guide, radio station
4. The recreation coordinator helps plan, execute and promote events and activities with groups and organizations by:
- (a) Helping user groups communicate their needs
 - (b) Soliciting input and opinions from user groups
 - (c) Soliciting input and participation by youth
 - (d) Facilitating coordinated use of resources and facilities among various user groups and organizers

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

- 1. Regular survey asks questions about recreation programs and use of facilities
- 2. Level of physical activity per capita increases year over year
- 3. Enrolment in formal recreation programs and activities and participation in informal recreation activities
- 4. Citizens are healthy and active and not overweight

ENERGY

In 2035 the community of Rocky Mountain House, population of 11,000+, has successfully managed to integrate an energy strategy in both government and community that has allowed it to reduce its energy consumption from non-renewable sources on a per capita basis and at the same time reduce the carbon impact from the 2009 base year when the population was at 7,300.

The most successful town government greenhouse gas reduction programs have not focused on climate change. They have focused on air pollution, economic development, traffic congestion, livability, land protection, fiscal performance or some other priority that really resonates with elected officials, staff and the community.

A town government can facilitate efficient building construction and retrofits through the promotion of third party incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy. These incentives would include federal and provincial energy efficiency grant programs and other incentive programs.

These promotional activities can also include educational information, for example on how to make homes and businesses more efficient, green building rating programs (Built Green, LEED, others); and other sources of information on green and energy efficient buildings.

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

1. Rocky Mountain House and area manages public and private energy use so as to:
 - (a) minimize the community's ecological footprint including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions,
 - (b) ensure reliability and security of energy supply,
 - (c) insulate the community from worldwide energy price shocks and shortages stemming from depleting fossil fuel sources.

2. This has been achieved through a threefold approach:
 - (a) increases in efficiencies of energy utilization- doing more with less,
 - (b) an emphasis on conservation through demand side management- doing less,
 - (c) and the gradual replacement of nonrenewable energy sources with renewable ones.

3. These reductions have been achieved through the combined efforts of individuals and families, business and industry, and public/government activities and have been brought about through:
 - (a) public education,
 - (b) economic incentives and disincentives,
 - (c) municipal policy and regulation,
 - (d) and influencing Federal and Provincial policy and practice.

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

We currently rely on fossil fuels for our transportation needs which is mainly met by private automobiles and transport trucks. The community also relies on fossil fuels for the creation of the energy that heats our homes and powers our appliances. We have little available by way of alternative energy sources such as wind power, solar power, heat recapture, biogas or hydro electricity in the local area or through the provincial energy grid. As a community we do not have comprehensive auditing or information pertaining to energy use and related costs by the community, businesses and individual households.

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. Develop a Community Energy and Emissions Plan which would include:
 - (a) Inventory of current emissions and energy use
 - (b) Target setting for reduced emissions and altered energy use including the replacement of nonrenewable energy sources with renewable ones
 - (c) An action plan to meet targets
2. Continue to compile and distribute information on greenhouse gas reduction technologies, programs, and policies that will improve Rocky Mountain House's economy and environment
3. Implement and support education and outreach programs to:
 - (a) Improve community understanding of the nature of the greenhouse gas effect and possible global, regional, and local impacts of climate change
 - (b) Inform residents, businesses, and institutions about how their actions affect greenhouse gas emissions
 - (c) Encourage residents, businesses, and institutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
 - (d) Showcase energy efficiency practices for households (e.g. local energy fair)

4. Provide tools to local residents and businesses to estimate their greenhouse gas emissions and emission reductions and encourage energy utility providers to help businesses and individual households understand their use of energy through energy audits
5. Work with local agencies to publicize greenhouse gas-reducing projects and actions through public education efforts
6. Encourage and support greenhouse gas-reduction efforts at provincial, national, and international levels
7. Complete a civic facility energy conservation plan to include (but not limited to) the following specific actions:
 - (a) Perform an energy audit on all existing public buildings complete with recommendations for improvement
 - (b) Retrofit existing public building floor space with energy efficiency improvements where practical
 - (c) Develop energy efficiency standards for all new public construction based on a 25% or better improvement over the Model National Energy Code for Buildings (a generally accepted standard)
 - (d) Utilize Life Cycle Costing (LCC). This helps local governments look beyond initial capital costs and assess infrastructure strategically over its entire life. LCC can significantly strengthen fiscal performance as well as contribute to large greenhouse gas reductions. Rather than evaluating projects on first cost, LCC considers the total cost of owning, operating and maintaining infrastructure over its useful life (including fuel, energy, labour, and replacement components). LCC is especially useful for evaluating premium efficiency infrastructure and renewable energy opportunities since their initial costs are often higher, but they tend to have lower operating and maintenance costs over the life of the project
8. Reduce municipal nonrenewable energy consumption and GHG emissions through the following steps:
 - (a) Commit where available to purchase electrical power from renewable sources and/or lobbying to have such sources made available,
 - (b) Implement an idling guideline for all public vehicles
 - (c) Develop a civic purchasing policy which prioritizes energy reduction and efficiency including policies to purchase ENERGY STAR® or equivalent products, where practical, for any equipment that uses electricity, natural gas, or fuel oil and to convert government vehicles from traditional gasoline and diesel to less GHG intensive fuels such as biodiesel

- (d) Install solar, geothermal, or other renewable energy applications at appropriate facilities
 - (e) Explore cost-effective opportunities to invest directly in new larger-scale renewable projects like wind, photovoltaic, geothermal, and landfill energy systems
 - (f) Convert street lights and traffic signals to more efficient technologies as they become available
 - (g) Educate employees and managers about sustainability with a focus on specific operational changes that can be made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
 - (h) Require employee education on fuel efficient driving and reducing energy use at work
 - (i) Review major policies and programs in the early stages of development to identify ways to reduce related greenhouse gas emissions
9. Develop a sustainability checklist as a non regulatory part of the building permit process (Note: a more active approach would be to provide incentives e.g. reduced permit costs, density bonusing, etc. for those applicants scoring high on the checklist)
 10. Undertake a partnership with a private developer to launch a "sustainability block" pilot project which might include:
 - (a) higher density
 - (b) mixed land use (public facilities, commercial space and residential)
 - (c) district energy system based on a renewable energy source
 - (d) high performance building to reduce energy use, emissions, and waste generation
 11. Explore the utilization of voluntary energy efficiency development guidelines and/or lobby to include such guidelines as a mandatory part of the Provincial Building Code. (for a report on the Alberta context see the Pembina Institutes report at <http://pubs.pembina.org/reports/ee-in-prov-building-code-aeaa.pdf>)
 12. Require a heat loss calculation/energuide audit as part of building permit process
 13. Require green building and energy-efficiency measures, including ENERGY STAR® or equivalent appliances, lighting, and heating equipment in development projects
 14. Support residential conservation programs through new agreements with local utilities

15. Provide a clearinghouse of information related to green building design assistance and technical resources to help residential developers, designers, homebuilders, and residents
16. Improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and control of outdoor lighting through regional efforts
17. Encourage residents and businesses to purchase an increasing percent of their electricity from new renewable sources by promoting green power as a community ethic
18. Support code and policy revisions that facilitate low-cost interconnection of photovoltaic and other renewable electricity systems and the ability to sell excess power to the public grid

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. Per capita consumption of nonrenewable energy over 2009 levels
2. Per capita green house gas emissions of the community
3. Total energy consumption per capita

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

It is 2035. Much change in Rocky Mountain House has taken place. The population has just reached the 11,000+ mark. The local economy along with the provincial economy has gone through its peaks and valleys. The economic base of Rocky has diversified and adjusted from its traditional dependence on oil and gas as the important base. A greater amount of the tourist industry has arisen in the area. The travel corridor westward is considerably busier. This has inspired a variety of businesses to invest in the area, including large bloc store(s). In general, growth has been steady.

Through a variety of different government incentives & policy changes, (at all levels), the planning and construction industry has undergone huge changes in regards to structural engineering. Through various strategies, discussed later, a paradigm shift in thinking has evolved which has resulted in greater efficiency and respect for the environment within affordable means allowing the community to sustain itself. Much of this came about as a result of the community focus on pollution, economic development, traffic congestion, livability, safety, and fiscal performance within the scope of which the citizen involvement could itself control in the community. Major challenges to sustainability will continue to exist for future generations.

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

1. Producing facilities that meet and balance the needs of all age groups
2. Creating a sense of place with a public pride and local distinctiveness and character
3. Constructing high quality, mixed use, durable as well as flexible and adaptable buildings
4. Practical and improved efficiency in land development projects
5. Restoration of, protection, and maintenance of the natural environment and green growth with due regard to the needs of future generations
6. The reduction of reliance on non-renewable energy sources on a per capita scale
7. Maintaining affordable energy costs within the built environment

8. Reliable data collection through monitoring tools for comparative measuring of ecological progress
9. Enhancement, education, and encouragement of a lifestyle that minimizes the negative impacts on the environment and enhances the positive impact on environment (i.e. land use strategies, building management education.)

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. Some public facilities reaching end of life cycle, need of renovation, or needing expansion
2. Downtown business vacancy rate is high. Downtown in need of restoration and/or economic rebirth
3. Energy costs and operating costs are generally thought to be high
4. Lack of knowledge and commitment by citizens to change lifestyle in a more energy efficient way, but there is growth in interest in doing this
5. Changing to alternate energy forms, and energy saving construction is still expensive
6. Land is expensive and at a premium for future development
7. Services are dependent on volunteers and community commitment and desire in a small community
8. Rocky Mountain House is a busy centre with excellent potential, vast resources, and a relatively clean environment

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. Encourage developers to provide energy efficient housing
 - (a) Use of alternate energy sources
 - (b) Housing materials and standards which provide energy savings
 - (c) Energy checklist adopted for all planning
 - (d) Design new homes to be able to accommodate non-renewable energy sources in the future

2. Changes in land use bylaws, Provincial & Federal guidelines to create higher density neighborhoods
 - (a) allow greater heights, less frontage
 - (b) incentives for row housing, connected structures and the like
 - (c) creative neighborhood planning....courtyard style yard sharing
3. Continue to encourage attainable housing initiatives
4. Create neighborhood nodes or service centres within close, easy non-motorized travel distances of residential areas without eroding the viability of downtown
5. Landscaping programs for private owners to enhance aesthetic beauty and save water
 - (a) Retaining ponds, natural vegetation within residential neighborhoods
 - (b) streetscaping-treed boulevards to beautify neighborhoods
 - (c) Developing neighborhoods with a theme
 - (d) "Rooftop greeneries" with agricultural (e.g. permaculture opportunities) and aesthetic value
6. Replace, expand, adapt municipal structures nearing the end of their life cycles and/or unable to meet growing public demand.
 - (a) Inventory the present structures regarding their usability
 - (b) Set long term plan of priorities regarding changes above
 - (c) Reserve land and space for development
7. Incorporate energy efficiency in new construction and additions to buildings
8. Public officials and employees are made knowledgeable of best practices regarding daily operations in buildings
9. Seek/encourage partners within the public groups and the business community to develop structures.
 - (a) consider multi-use structures that reduce operating costs to sustain themselves over time
 - (b) a permanent public engagement process that communicates the needs and wants of the local society
10. Evaluate current studies and establish long term plan and priorities for future facilities (e.g. Community Needs Study)

11. Energize the BRZ committee with incentives and expertise to improve downtown structures
 - (a) establish a theme (history)
 - (b) develop a gathering place
12. Promote more public events in the downtown area and maintain the downtown beautification program
13. Encourage creative communities
 - (a) Advertising campaigns to attract skilled professionals, investors from other countries.
 - (b) Promote town to attract business and industry that are not resource based (culture, arts, education, tourism etc.)
14. Explore the creation of a Commercial Development Corporation that allows public investment through shares (Co-op idea) to help fund building projects
15. Authorities apply specific questions when approving future developments such as:
 - (a) Does the decision to develop minimize negative environmental impact?
 - (i) What is the impact on air and water quality?
 - (ii) Is this efficient use of the natural resources?
 - (b) Is there sufficient citizen involvement in sustaining the built environment?
 - (i) Do community groups step up to the plate?
 - (ii) Are family & individual initiatives encouraged in this environment?
 - (c) What are the implications for sustainable community growth?
 - (i) Does the proposed development(s) incorporate a mixture/balance of compatible land uses...jobs, services, recreation, transportation accessibility?
 - (d) What are the implications for the community natural areas, open spaces, and urban forests?

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. Increase the density of residential areas to have an average density of 12 units per hectare
2. Record the percentage increase of developed land compared to percentage increase in population

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is vital to the life style we enjoy in our communities. The goal for transportation in the next few years is maintenance of that lifestyle. All residents should have access to the goods and services required to maintain that lifestyle. Changes in attitudes and modes of transportation will be required to reach a level of energy efficiency and sustainability.

1. Transportation Factors

- (a) Regional transportation primarily concerns the bringing in goods not produced locally and the shipment of locally produced goods to external markets. It also includes access to work and to services that are not locally available.
- (b) Local transportation is more related to our daily lives. This is how we get to work, or to school and to the goods and services we need every day.
- (c) Tourism involves both local and regional aspects of transportation. Development of a regional transportation system could present opportunities for growth of tourism.

2. Sustainability Considerations

- (a) The continued viability of transportation over the next twenty years raises following questions.
 - (i) Are the roads sufficient to carry the expected volume of traffic through the area?
 - (ii) What are the ongoing costs of maintaining the existing transportation infrastructure
 - (iii) Will continued extensive use for personal vehicles be viable or desirable?
 - (iv) What changes in urban design/planning are required to reduce dependence on personal private vehicles and support other mass transit options.
 - (v) What routing changes in local traffic are desirable to support growth of the town?
 - (vi) What options for local and regional transportation are available to reduce the seat/mile costs and carbon footprint?

- (vii) What action must be taken to support the different transportation options?
- (viii) How can the need for transportation be reduced?

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

Tom, Richard and Mary leave their homes in the morning. Tom is a heavy equipment operator. He rides his motorcycle through town to the railway station. Tom's employer has been upgrading intersections from 4 ways stops to traffic circles in several central Alberta locations. The work in Stettler was finished last week. Today they will start in two locations near Sylvan Lake. The foreman will pick up Tom and other workers at the station.

Richard is a consulting engineer. Most days he works from home and uses broadband internet to participate in projects based out of both Edmonton and Calgary offices. Today he will join a meeting with clients and spend some time with his co-workers. Yesterday, 6 people in 4 different locations ran through the client presentation. It is a beautiful morning so Richard walks one of the paths to the station. He will transfer to the bullet train in Red Deer for the trip to Calgary. He will answer e-mails, work on some reports and make business calls on the trip. Richard's wife will travel to Red Deer later to do some shopping. They will have dinner together in Sylvan Lake on the way home.

Mary is an occupational therapist specializing in brain injuries. She chooses to live in Rocky Mountain House rather than in the city. The regional transportation system makes it possible for her to have full time work and to use her specialized skills to help local people. The regional transportation system is a unique public/private sector operation and is recognised as an important factor in the economic growth of the region. Because Mary has a pass for the system, she is entitled to a discounted rental of an electric commuter vehicle at the station. She frequently uses these vehicles to get to her clinic or to some of the clients homes. The cars are normally parked under an awning that is made up of solar panels. These panels are the prime source of power to recharge the vehicle batteries. The commuter vehicles have priority parking spots in many locations to promote their use.

Mary and Tom are talking on the train. They are both involved in community organizations that are active in the weekend's events. A Community Builder organization has brought business, community and culture together to make RMH a tourism destination. The weekend will include special promotions at local businesses, different musical venues, a pancake brunch, a 'period' meal and entertainment at the Historic Park. Local artists, photographers and craftspeople have their works on display. A neighbourhood garage sale has also been organized. People have found that the regional transportation system takes the stress out of traveling the busy highway. They enjoy coming to the West Country because they have so many recreation options available to them.

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. The current reality in our society is the reliance on personal family vehicles to meet all travel needs ...near and far. The average North American household has multiple vehicles for their travel needs. The environmental impact of the manufacture, operation and disposal of these vehicles is a significant factor in climate change.
2. Petroleum reserves are declining and getting more expensive to recover.
3. Most people don't hesitate to jump in their vehicles to travel a short distance. There is an impact on our general health from lack of exercise.
4. There is an economic shift from North America to the Orient. The affluence that has supported the automotive industry is not expected to continue.
5. The idea that individuals can consume so much energy for transportation and release it into the environment is unsupportable.
6. There is a looming bill for maintenance of the existing transportation infrastructure. Can the economy support the construction of more highways to support personal travel when the existing infrastructure is not being maintained?

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

Petroleum based, personal transportation is not sustainable at its current levels due to declining and increasingly expensive fuel reserves. The impact of releasing the energy and combustion by-products into the environment continues to become apparent through climate change.

1. Regional travel
 - (a) Growth of the local population will bring in more commercial and retail outlets and other services; this natural development will reduce the number of "out of town" shopping trips and bring more shoppers to the area
 - (b) The expanded use of broadband will enable virtual meetings, shopping and education without travel
 - (c) Local production and storage of food would reduce transportation of imports as well as benefiting the local economy

- (d) A regional transit system that has the convenience and costs to compete with personal vehicles should be developed. Contact and co-operation with other towns and municipalities will be required. The rail system is underutilized; a railway based regional transit system would take pressure off of the highway
- (e) Develop a car pool hotline to increase vehicle utilization and explore the possibility of a car pool lot at the south end of town
- (f) Explore car-sharing and bicycle-sharing opportunities

2. Local travel

- (a) Area structure plans and land use bylaws should be adjusted to promote:
 - (i) Development of small commercial centres within residential areas
 - (ii) European style of downtown buildings, where lower levels are commercial or retail and upper levels are residential. This promotes a vibrant downtown
 - (iii) "Complete Streets" which take into account many modes of travel and activity within a road right-of-way
 - (iv) User-friendly pedestrian & non-motorized trails linking residential areas with commercial & recreational facilities. These trail systems are also good for leisure, health and wellness
 - (v) Easy and safe crossings for highways/main stream corridors
 - (vi) Ample, secure parking for alternate means of travel
 - (vii) Shared public parking facility in the downtown core
- (b) Change transportation plans to implement more traffic circles and design major transportation arteries to emphasize right turns to reduce use of fuel and idling time. Make allowance for increased levels of vehicle congestion to encourage non-motorized forms of travel
- (c) Explore the creation of a public transit system. One possibility is the 'handi-bus' which could become the town's transit bus making several runs a day. A first morning run would get people to school and to work. Later runs would take disabled people and seniors where they needed to go. Afternoon runs would take students and workers home, evening shift people to work and could include movie and bar runs
- (d) A change in public mindset and expectations about travel is also required. A mass transit system has to be convenient and affordable. Low ridership will never support a convenient transit system. Innovative education, promotion, awareness and incentive programs would need to be developed to increase ridership. Support by business and industry would make it successful

3. The Town and County should work with other nearby towns and municipalities to develop and promote regional transportation strategies. This group should then work to bring public and private resources together to implement those strategies
4. Land use regulations should be modified to:
 - (a) promote more downtown residential space
 - (b) promote business centres within residential areas
 - (c) require inclusion of walking and cycling paths as options to private motor vehicles in new areas
5. Highways and roadways should be redesigned to remove bottlenecks in traffic flow
 - (a) Implement traffic circles and routes with right turns to minimize stopping and idling
 - (b) a highway by-pass route would not slow down traffic that does not need to stop. It would also take pressure off of the town through-route, make in-town traffic more efficient and make the highway less divisive
6. Town and county officials should talk more about transportation options to keep it in the public mind
7. Existing underutilized assets, like the railway and the local handi-bus should be considered as options for providing improved transportation services

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. Reduction in the number of vehicles per household
2. Reduction in the number of kilometres travelled per week per capita
3. Increase in the average number of people per vehicle

CULTURAL DIVERSITY & HERITAGE

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

1. All ages and ethnicities are aware of cultural differences but share community pride in an environment of understanding and tolerance
2. Small "c" cultural diversity and lifestyle cultures are recognized and embraced as part of the fabric of the community
3. Community events that create a hub of activity and new interest in the West Country
4. Heritage and history are integrated into the day to day workings of the community
5. We promote and celebrate our diversity by attending events in outlying communities taking the opportunity to educate on Rocky Mountain House
6. Our aboriginal first nations contributions combined with a strong Metis influence are a touch point for the community as we share the stories, wisdom and harmony with nature with all citizens
7. The museums are hubs for collecting the artifact sets along with the histories and "stories" of the community
8. A multicultural centre houses a volunteer centre, an expanded library and museum with theatre, music, dance and diverse art interests studio space and galleries to encourage local talent. It serves as a major gathering place for the community

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. Festival of Culture annually and the Native Friendship Centre's ongoing programming are foundations for the future. An expanding base of cultural awareness activities will be needed as the community becomes more diverse in the future

2. Western culture, outdoors, leisure pursuits are part of the small "c" and lifestyle culture of our community and an array of events are needed to address the diverse population of the community
3. Many events are stand alone and if combined would create a greater draw and attract more diverse interest. One of the limiting factors is the limited pool of volunteers
4. Kudos on the historic plaques in the business revitalization zone as they educate and help to instill community pride
5. Participation in other community's events such as parades has been limited
6. The Native Friendship Centre has on-going initiatives to not only educate and support their roots but to engage the community at large. We respect their right to initiate and provide the bridge for closer links to the surrounding reserves
7. The museum has recognized David Thompson and done an admiral job of preserving portions of the community's history
8. Currently the arena and curling rink are the gathering point during the winter. Those who would utilize a multicultural centre are scattered and housed in smaller facilities

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. Continue to host and expand the variety of events and activities such as: Cabana Sucre, powwow's, round dances, Aboriginal Day, Canada Day in the Park, ethnic feature days, mud bogs, demo derbies, rodeos, logger competitions, cowboy poetry, quad/snowmobile rallies and races, car and bike races. We recognize that our past has seen a mix of western cowboy, mountain men and women, lumbering, miners, oil patch, trapping and farming and these diverse resource bases have their own cultural components that have to be recognized as part of the heritage and heart of the community and events broaden cultural awareness
2. Expansion of the historic plaques program to other areas of the community (e.g. along walking trails)
3. We need to plan on having a presence in the outlying communities' parades (e.g. Calgary Stampede) and participate in trade fairs and celebrations as a means to educate on the heritage and cultural diversity of our community

4. Continued support of the Native Friendship Centre initiatives and programs, to share the strong aboriginal cultural roots with the community at large, increasing understanding, acceptance and respect and instilling community pride
5. An expanded museum would have the capacity to tell more of our history, share more stories of the pioneer days and on and build interest in our roots and pride in how we have grown. This could be supported with a green initiative family sponsored tree planting program - trees planted to represent the past and present families' roots in the community - that would beautify, clean and green while telling more family stories. Local genealogy groups, writers and historians will have plenty to keep them busy
6. Explore the creation of a centre to house the cultural and heritage components of the community under one roof, possibly in combination with an arts centre. It would provide the support for the development of a multitude of potential ethnic and cultural groups, offer a meeting place for the local genealogy society and provide program space to help in the celebration of different cultures. The vision is of a "melting pot" building that provides common ground as well as celebrating our differences

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. All citizens share a sense of pride and respect for their individual differences and enjoy the celebrations of the different cultures in the community
2. Our community is noted for its inclusive nature and respect for all citizens interests
3. A successful year round calendar of special events that recognize the diverse interests of the community that engages volunteers and attracts outside interest and economic stimulus (new dollars from tourists into the community)

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Description of Success (where we would like to be in 15-25 years)

1. Building from a strong foundation of cooperation and volunteer support, the Town of Rocky Mountain House, Clearwater County and regional fire departments provide quick responses by well trained teams to any fire related emergencies
2. Airport continues to be a designated fire bombing base with well maintained runways and the best technology to meet the needs to safely operate
3. Policing services that respond to the community's needs quickly with collaboration between various levels and areas of policing that allows shared responsibility for enforcement of various Acts to effectively address crime as it happens
4. Respect for the law, compliance with bylaws and active enforcement of all bylaws on the books
5. Crime free and safe community
6. Celebrating the positives with an awards program
7. Ambulance services with qualified staff, excellent response times supported by STARS for speedy delivery to specialized service providers as necessary
8. Search and Rescue capability to meet any calls for assistance that may arise
9. "The Jungle" (an area occupied by homeless or others for overnight stays) no longer exists. A community that cares for all members, disadvantaged to advantaged, young to aging by creating secure environments to live
10. Planning for a safe community starting with the development of new subdivisions and working on upgrades in older areas to create an attractive, safe for all ages community to live, work and play in
11. Attention to infrastructure details that ensures the safe use of streets and sidewalks by all citizens

12. A community that has lost its negative attitudes and provides opportunities to actively participate in the community feel a part of the community and take pride in the community

Current Reality (what is happening/where we think we are today)

1. Cooperative partnering is a valued resource for fire protection services. Much of the service is volunteer and aging with a lack of youth entering the departments
2. The long runway and ongoing expansion of the hangar services is an asset with the airport being one of only a limited number of financially sustainable airstrips in the Province. It not only contributes to community safety, and, with the regular air shows and access to the West Country attracts tourists and is a source of community pride
3. RCMP, Sheriffs, special constables, peace officers and school resource officers currently serve the community. Major concerns are the central dispatch out of Red Deer, response times and the staff turn-over especially in the RCMP detachment and the enforcement of bylaws and laws on the books
4. The bylaws on the books, including the community standards bylaw would meet the needs into the future if there was respect and community compliance twinned with enforcement. Illegal turns on main street, vandalism, jaywalking around the schools and main street and snow removal compliance were key areas of concern
5. Community advisory committee on policing needs to be kept up to date and active
6. Occasional feel good stories of actions by individuals in the media
7. Ambulances services are now part of the health services and have served the community well. Concern was with rural address calls and the need for better addressing systems. In addition the need for a corridor road to bypass the tracks was an issue as train traffic can cause traffic jams and in the event of an emergency could be a barrier to speedy response
8. We are fortunate to have an excellent volunteer Search and Rescue group which is there to support the many lifestyle activities enjoyed by West Country residents. Like the fire departments they need more youth involvement to ensure long term viability

9. Transients making the bush their home, homeless with no where else to go, mental health and addictions issues left unaddressed have helped to lay the foundations for the "jungle" community
10. Main street corner paving stonework is aesthetically great but a strong slip and fall factor with moisture/ice; main street stairs are other hazards for many as visual acuity declines with age; and the cutaway curbs that are regularly filled with ice/snow pushed up by road clearing
11. Much of the activity opportunities centre around sports which can be a barrier due to expense. With latch-key kids and breakdown of the family it is imperative that there are affordable extra-curricular activities to keep our youth occupied

Actions (how to move towards our desired future/success)

1. Recruiting youth to the departments by allowing high school credit for volunteering and training hours; working with the Junior Forest Rangers and other organizations to integrate and actively involve them in the local fire departments; and continued support of the Fire Smart Program for community development, fire safety programs in the schools for its ongoing education value as well as an introduction to the volunteer departments
2. Ensure budgets include the necessary funding to maintain the community safety infrastructure and resources (e.g. fire, police and ambulance) and to expand as demand necessitates
3. Regular reviews of policies and bylaws to revise and meet the changing needs of the community. Enforcing of an anti-bullying bylaw, adequate lighting for safety (lights reduce vandalism and solar options are environmentally friendly), enforcing curfews, vandalism penalties that place responsibility on both youth and parents
4. Involve all community participants - Block Parents, crime watch, installation of community cameras (internet viewing), Citizens on Patrol or respecting all who offer to serve as an extra pair of eyes, reporting concerns as they arise. Support a more active and inclusive of all levels of policing community advisory committee that could work with the "enforcers" to find and implement creative programs to proactively address crime and wrong doing in the community
5. Institute a "Caught Doing Good" awards program for kids and adults to recognize good deeds (ie. shoveling snow off a senior's sidewalk, picking up litter, lending a hand wherever needed, etc)

6. Implementation of addressing systems with GPS mapping for more seamless emergency service delivery. Ongoing financial support of the STARS program as part of the emergency response services. Begin planning for access to the area south of the railway
7. Implement a junior mentoring program to recruit and encourage youth to become involved in Search and Rescue. Add a local dog patrol to compliment the Search and Rescue groups and enhance capabilities
8. Continue sidewalk maintenance program to reduce the trip/fall risks on shifting sidewalks or replacement with new materials and designs that work better with our climate conditions
9. Grip coating to ensure aesthetic details are not safety risk, color painting a strip on the main street steps to enhance visibility, and maintenance that keeps the handicap cutaways clear and useable by all
10. Support youth programming that focuses on citizenship and safety and awareness (e.g. Boys and Girls Club programming - taking one step, one child, one attitude at a time; a variety of extra-curricular options such as 4-H for in town - caring for animals has been proven to change attitudes - work with ROAR to facilitate working with animals)

Measures (how we will know if we have succeeded)

1. An active recruitment of youth and departments that reflect a spectrum of ages trained and ready to combat fires. Ongoing viability of the volunteer departments as a priority of the governing bodies. Clearing to produce open space fire barriers for a safer community
2. A well maintained, financially viable airport
3. Enforcement and dispatch that responds quickly to community members concerns
4. Reduction in incidents of vandalism per capita
5. Community satisfaction with the levels of policing, and programs that address problems as they arise

6. Pride in the community by all ages, caring about neighbors and the community, citizens taking an active role in building a better community
7. Active groups well trained ready to respond to any requests for assistance as they arise
8. Reduced calls to law enforcement to address issues
9. On going maintenance that addresses some of the smaller safety issues but do make a difference in the citizens' sense of living in a safe community environment
10. Reduced vandalism, youth crime statistics reduced, a social network that supports the healthy growth and development of our youth in a safe environment

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

To be written following Committee discussion

APPENDIX A: PLAN PROCESS

To be written following further public review