

# Toward Sustainable Mountain Communities: Balancing Tourism Development and Environmental Protection in Banff and Banff National Park, Canada

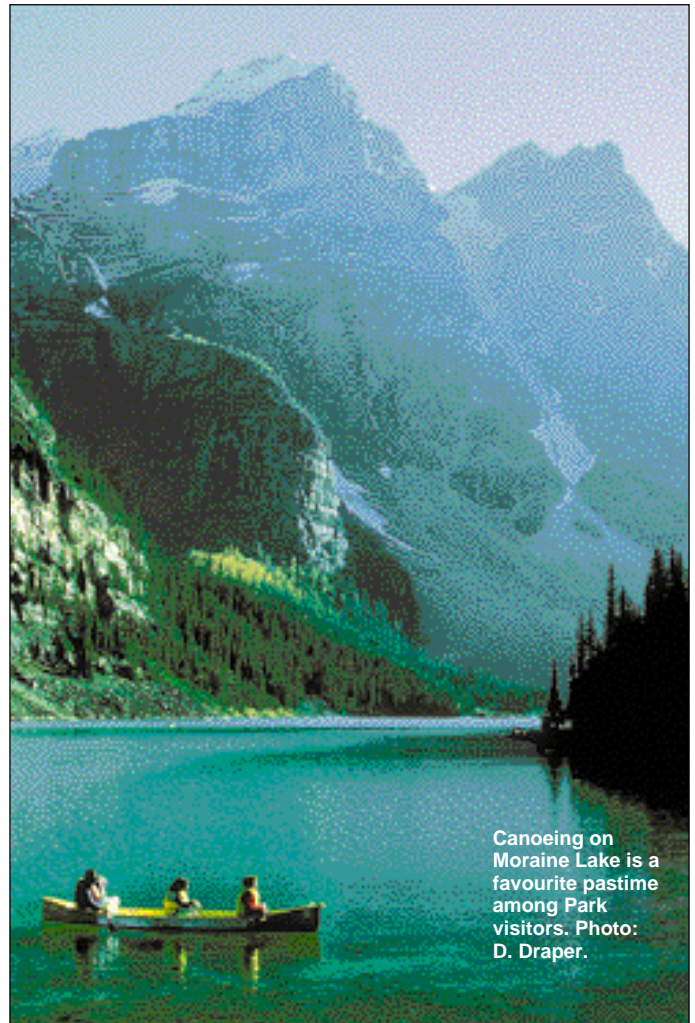
Although they may have been studied less extensively than those in developing nations, mature mountain tourism communities such as Banff, Canada, potentially have useful insights to offer the international community regarding principles and practices for developing sustainable, community-based mountain tourism. Toward that end, this paper focuses on *the Banff Community Plan* in order to highlight 'made-in-Banff' solutions to issues of governance in sustainable mountain tourism. Banff's approach to balancing tourism development and environmental protection may be unique, given its complex 115-year history of association with Banff National Park. Nevertheless, the town now employs innovative principles such as 'no net negative environmental impact' and 'appropriate development and use' in its efforts to become a balanced and sustainable national park community. Such principles may contribute to implementation of Chapter 13 (the Mountain Agenda) of Agenda 21 and to resolution of governance issues in achieving sustainable mountain communities.

## INTRODUCTION

Banff National Park is one of the world's most significant protected areas and among the world's most popular tourist destinations. Long regarded as the 'crown jewel' of the Canadian National Parks system, Banff's spectacular Rocky Mountain scenery, abundant wildlife and outstanding recreational opportunities annually attract millions of international and domestic visitors. As Banff and many other international destinations have discovered, however, the mountain tourism industry can have important long-term, frequently negative, impacts on communities, people and environments (1, 2). Two major challenges currently facing many local and national governments are to obtain the desired benefits of tourism without the associated problems and to ensure that sustainable destinations result from their management efforts (3).

The centrality of governance issues in achieving sustainability (4) of mountain communities and tourism destinations has become evident. Internationally, governmental and nongovernmental organizations alike have struggled with the challenges involved in balancing development and conservation of mountain resources as well as with the mechanisms to enhance communication and cooperation in local implementation of the Mountain Agenda (Chapter 13 of Agenda 21) or similar initiatives (2, 3, 5, 6). If the challenge of governance can be met—and economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism can be directed through appropriate strategies, rather than occur indiscriminately—then tourism can serve as an engine for sustainable community development (3).

While the need to enhance knowledge and understanding of tourism impacts on mountain communities worldwide has been recognized, mature mountain tourism destinations appear to have been studied less extensively than those in developing nations (2, 7). Mature destinations including the town of Banff and Banff



Canoeing on Moraine Lake is a favourite pastime among Park visitors. Photo: D. Draper.

National Park potentially have useful insights to offer the international community regarding principles and practices for developing sustainable, community-based mountain tourism. Toward that end, this paper examines some of the issues and challenges encountered, and precedent-setting actions taken, as the town of Banff has attempted to balance tourism development and environmental protection within its boundaries.

Specifically, this paper considers the *Banff Community Plan* and selected complementary planning documents as a means to highlight how Banff is attempting to become a sustainable mountain community and to achieve a sustainable tourism-based economy. Banff's approach to balancing tourism development and environmental protection may be unique, given its lengthy history of association with Banff National Park. Nevertheless, the town currently is attempting to implement innovative practices such as a 'no net negative environmental impact' principle and an 'appropriate development and use' framework in its efforts to become an international model for what a gateway

community can be. Increasing awareness of the nature and application of such practices may contribute to implementation of the Mountain Agenda and to governance issues in achieving sustainable mountain communities.

In presenting the Banff example, this paper first provides a brief overview of the importance of Banff National Park, the developmental pressures facing the townsite and the Park, and the regional tourism outlook. Actions taken to improve governance are then identified: both the nature of the *Banff Community Plan* and the public participation process which contributed to its generation are described. The paper concludes with comments regarding the potential relevance of Banff's actions to other mountain tourism destinations.

Information regarding the *Banff Community Plan* and community planning process was derived through personal interviews conducted between 1994 and 1999 with relevant planning and other municipal officials in the town of Banff and with members of the Banff-Bow Valley Task Force. Officials interviewed included Banff's Managers of Planning and Development (8) and the Director of Environmental Services. Publications, reports and other documents prepared by the town of Banff, *Parks Canada* and the Banff-Bow Valley Study, also were consulted.

## DEVELOPMENTAL PRESSURES FACING BANFF AND BANFF NATIONAL PARK

### The Importance of Banff National Park

Both established in 1885, Banff National Park and Banff townsite are Canada's oldest national park and best-known mountain resort community (Fig. 1). Part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1984, Banff National Park is of fundamental ecological, economic, cultural and social significance to Canada and the world (9).

The Park's ecological significance relates, among other factors, to its location as a central component of the Rocky Mountain Ecosystem (stretching from Wyoming to northern British

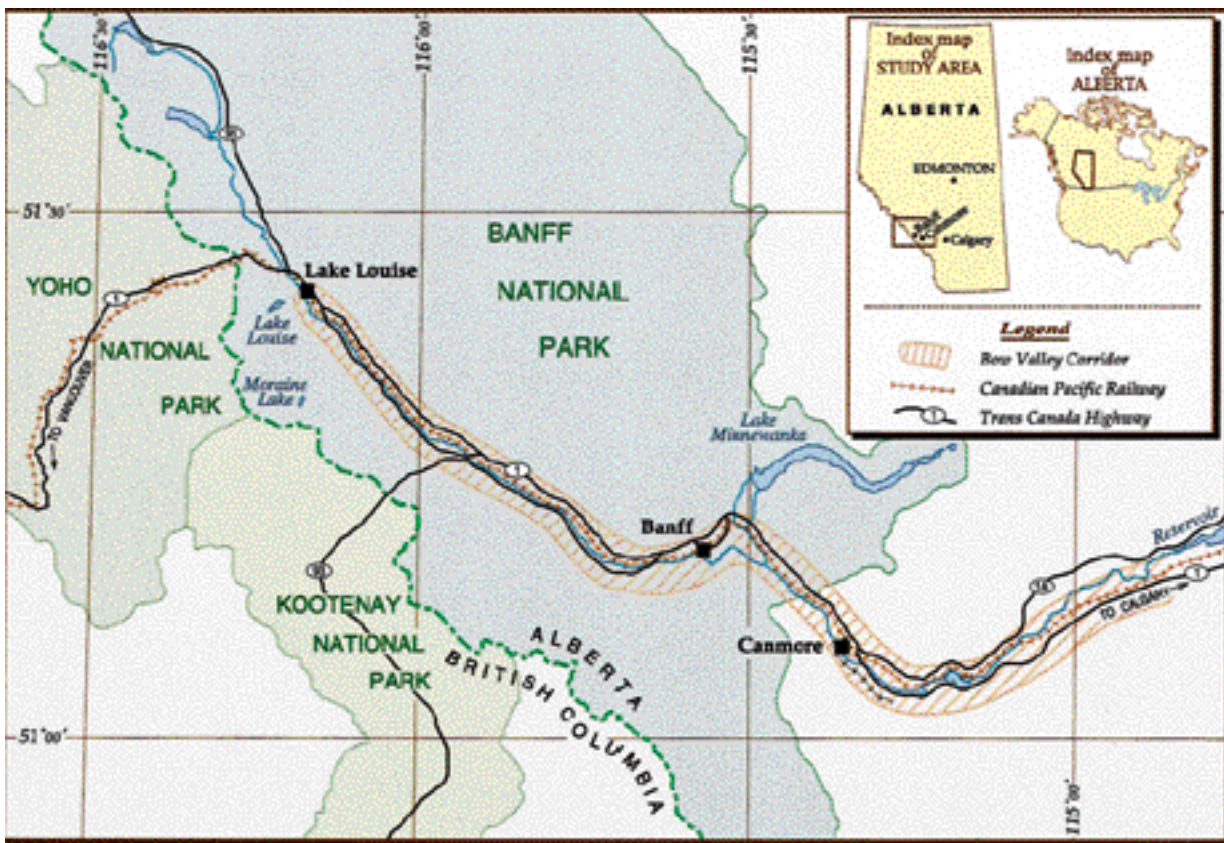
Columbia) and its provision of core habitat for a variety of plant and animal species. An icon used increasingly in marketing endeavours by Canada's tourism industry, Banff National Park also is a recognized part of the history, culture, built heritage and national identity of Canadians. The importance of the Park has been stated clearly: "With current global trends in development and the resulting destruction of ecosystems, Banff National Park can only increase in ecological and tourism value ... if we have the foresight to avoid the errors of others in our stewardship of this priceless area" (9).

### Tourism Development Pressures

Since the Park and the town were established, developmental pressures have been continuous. Whether it was railway tourism in the 1880s that brought elite European and North American travellers to Banff's hot springs, or the expansion of highway and air transportation networks in the 1960s that enabled the public to indulge its interest in skiing, the long-term result of human use was growth in mass tourism and development of 4-season tourism in Banff National Park and townsite. Pressures from human use, particularly tourism activity, have resulted in an array of obvious and subtle impacts and consequences for Banff National Park and townsite. These impacts range from the wildlife mortality associated with the transportation and utility corridor that runs through the Park, to a potential shift in the economy of the townsite that is expected to reflect the values of an elite recreational center and result in a loss of cultural heritage (9).

The need to balance tourism development and environmental protection in Banff National Park and townsite has been recognized, virtually since their establishment. Through the intervening 115 years, a complex history of federal government legislation, policies and regulations has evolved in attempts to control land and resource use in the Park and to influence tourism development in Banff. While this paper does not deal with Banff's lengthy governance history, the critical issue of 'appropriate use' continues to be a focus of attention today, and is considered later

Figure 1. The Banff-Bow Valley, Alberta, Canada.





Glacier lilies bloom profusely in meadows near Healey Creek.  
Photo: D. Draper.

in the paper. Initially, federal policy had promoted Canada's national parks primarily as places of business. A policy shift was evident when, in 1911, the federal government defined 'appropriate use' of parks in the *National Parks Act*. A key principle was that the only businesses in Banff (and other parks) were to be those "absolutely necessary for the recreation of the people" (10).

Visitor numbers to Banff National Park grew from under 500 000 in 1950 to more than 3.5 million in the early 1980s, coinciding with growth in the public and political influence of the environmental movement. At this time, Parks Canada (11) acknowledged both an increase in serious public concern about the impacts of tourism and recreational development on Banff National Park's ecological integrity, and the continuation of challenges to the federal government's management and governance efforts (9). In the late 1980s, the need to balance tensions between development and protection, particularly between the business community and environmental interests, had become acute. By this time, the Bow Valley corridor had come under increasingly intense touristic, recreational and residential development pressures that threatened the ecological integrity, cultural heritage and social and economic character of Banff National Park and townsite (9, 12, 13).

In 1994, in response to these threats, the Minister of Canadian Heritage (14) announced the 2-year-long Banff-Bow Valley Study. This study was initiated to ensure that sustainable management and land-use strategies were developed and implemented to protect the environmental integrity as well as the social and economic vitality of the Banff-Bow Valley for future generations.

With the release of its technical report in 1996, the Banff-Bow Valley Study Task Force team warned that Banff National Park was at a significant crossroads. The relentless and escalating pressures of human use not only put the Park's ecological integrity at risk but also jeopardized "the very founda-

tion of an enduring and profitable tourism economy" (9). This warning came as Banff National Park received more than 5 million visitors in 1995, almost 80% of whom visited the town of Banff and who spent in excess of CAD 873 million on goods and services in the townsite (R. Page, 1996, pers. comm.).

As a result of years of continued growth in tourist numbers and demands, the town of Banff has become an urban anomaly located within the natural landscape of Banff National Park. Currently, within its 4.87 km<sup>2</sup> boundaries, the townsite supports 250 specialty and retail shops, 118 restaurants, 51 hotels, motels and lodges (with a capacity of over 12 800 persons per night), major conference and convention facilities, 47 bed-and-breakfast operations, 1162 campsites, a 27-hole golf course associated with the Banff Springs Hotel, 3 museums and the Banff Centre for the Arts (9, 13; R. McKay, 1999, pers. comm.).

To service its millions of visitors Banff townsite requires a physical infrastructure large enough to support 30 000 persons even though its permanent population is estimated at only 7615 (12) (R. McKay, 1999, pers. comm.). To date, the provision of large-scale and commercial infrastructural elements to accommodate year-round visitation in the town is not supported by visitor user fees. For instance, tourist parking in a multi-storey parking garage is free, and no 'toilet tax' or other demand management strategy is levied by the municipal government to offset the costs of water supply and treatment facilities for visitor use (13). The preceding and following statistics provide evidence of the financial strain borne by the town as a result of current and projected tourism development.

### Tourism Outlook for the Region

From 1950 to 1995, Banff National Park experienced a 5.46% average compounded annual growth rate in numbers of visitors (9). The tourism outlook for the Park, townsite and Bow Valley

Table 1. Sustainable planning elements in local Agenda 21 and Banff Community Plan.

Elements of sustainable Development Planning in Local Agenda 21	Sustainable Planning Elements in Banff Community Plan
<p><b>Partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish organizational planning structure</li> <li>• establish shared community vision</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Steering Committee</li> <li>✓ Steering Committee defined scope and process of Plan including extensive public participation, input</li> <li>✓ planning team development alternative scenarios</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community-Based Issue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify issues that must be addressed to achieve the community vision</li> <li>• do detailed assessments of priority problems and issues</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community-Based Issue Analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Steering Committee commissions background studies to understand issues</li> <li>✓ 13 issues areas form basic framework of plan</li> <li>✓ community workshops, open houses, newsletters and telephone hotline informed the public, sought input</li> <li>✓ detailed information-Banff-Bow Valley Study report</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agree on action goals, commit to take specific actions (within set time frames), create strategies to achieve commitments</li> <li>• formalize into action plan</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ specific Plan actions relate to: commercial/residential growth; managing growth; built heritage; appearance and atmosphere of the community; noise, water and air quality; lighting; architectural standards and themes; landscaping standards</li> <li>✓ community goals and objectives must meet Banff National Park Management Plan requirements</li> <li>✓ time frame for action: immediate and ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implementation and Monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create structures for implementation and internal management</li> <li>• monitor activities and changes in services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Implementation and Monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Town Council coordinates Community Plan; Environmental Services Department and other appropriate municipal agencies and committees implement objectives detailed in Plan</li> <li>✓ through monitoring and review, plan should remain flexible to address diversity of community issues</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluation and Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conduct periodic performance evaluations and provide results to service providers and users</li> <li>• repeat issue analysis and planning process reviews periodically</li> <li>• celebrate and reward success</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evaluation and Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ annual "State of the town" reports regarding Plan effectiveness are prepared for Council and Banff residents; public can suggest changes to Plan and Planning staff will address such suggestions</li> <li>✓ comprehensive review and update of Community Plan to be conducted about 5 years after Plan adopted</li> </ul>
<p>Sources: The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and The International Development Research Council, Toronto (17); Banff-Bpw Valley Study, Ottawa (9).</p>	

is one of continued growth as a major tourism destination. Based on a 5.46% growth rate, visitation projections indicate that perhaps as many as 19.3 million people could come to the Park by the year 2020 (9, 15). Even if the growth rate were reduced to 3%, more than 10.3 million visitors might be expected to enter the Park gates (9, 15). In addition, regional population growth and associated development, as well as the accompanying demands for outdoor recreation, are expected to fully occupy the Bow Valley corridor and consume the natural areas surrounding Banff National Park (9).

These touristic and other developmental pressures that have brought Banff “to the crossroads” have resulted in an acknowledged need for limits to growth and growth management strategies in order to reduce environmental, economic and social losses in Banff and area (9, 16). These pressures also are among those that have resulted in new planning legislation, policies and development guidelines in the town of Banff, and it is toward these actions to improve governance that this paper now turns.

## TOWARD COMMUNITY AND TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY IN BANFF

### Local Agenda 21 Context

Chapter 13 of Agenda 21 identifies the need to generate and strengthen “knowledge about the ecology and sustainable development of mountain ecosystems” and to promote “alternative livelihood opportunities”, including sustainable tourism, in mountain regions (7). The importance of action on governance issues also was highlighted by the Mountain Agenda in its identification of the immediate need for “proper management of mountain resources and socio-economic development of the people” (7).

Actions taken by the town of Banff toward community and tourism sustainability appear to have been conducted without specific reference to Local Agenda 21 initiatives. On the one hand, this is not surprising given the general lack of evidence concerning implementation of sustainable tourism through Local Agenda 21 mechanisms (17). On the other hand, a simple comparison of the five elements of “sustainable development planning” promoted within the Local Agenda 21 planning guide (18), with the elements employed in establishment of the Banff Community Plan, reveals that all major steps were incorporated (Table 1). As the Local Agenda 21 planning guide recommends for both developing and developed nations, the nature and sequencing of these elements was tailored to fit Banff’s circumstances. As a result, the context of Banff’s actions toward sustainability, including both legislative and nonlegislative instruments, can be configured as in Figure 2.

Although the process of establishing the Banff Community Plan is outlined briefly below, it is not the intent of this paper to provide a critical analysis of the public participation process or its effectiveness. Rather, in keeping with Agenda 21’s exhortation that nations should “enhance popular participation in the management of local resources through appropriate legislation” (7), the following section identifies mechanisms used to promote local involvement and commitment on the part of stakeholders affected by or involved in tourism and other commercial development in Banff. Since improved governance arrangements are required to ensure progress in implementation of the Moun-



During the twinning of the highway, two experimental wildlife overpasses were built in an effort to counteract the barrier effects of the Trans Canada Highway. Photo: D. Draper.

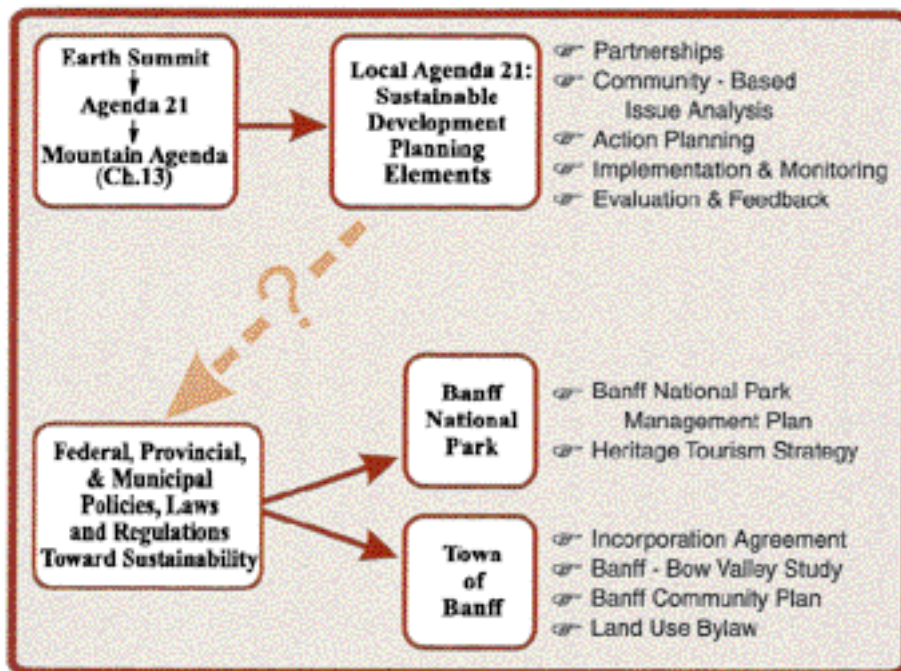
tain Agenda, perhaps future advances elsewhere in the world’s mountain areas may be informed by Banff’s example.

### Establishing the Banff Community Plan

Historically, the town of Banff was administered by Parks Canada as a service center for Park visitors and a home for permanent residents. On 1 January, 1990, the unique *Town of Banff Incorporation Agreement* came into effect, establishing how provincial jurisdiction could be exercised within a national park under federal jurisdiction. The *Incorporation Agreement* transferred most municipal government powers from the federal government to an elected Town Council and assigned most planning functions to the town. Parks Canada, however, retained authority over most environmental matters, including the environmental assessment and approval process, and final approval authority for subdivision and changes to the Land Use Bylaw.

In 1995, Banff began the task of revising and updating its *General Municipal Plan* adopted in 1990 at the time of incorporation (19). In part, this action was motivated by “a desire to pro-

Figure 2. Context of Banff’s Actions Toward Sustainability.



vide much broader participation by the citizens of Banff in the generation of the new plan” (20). Naming the new plan a ‘Community Plan’ was a deliberate effort to emphasize the community aspects of the process and the resultant plan that was intended to set an overall direction on issues of growth, development and quality of life in Banff.

On 26 June, 1995, Banff Town Council appointed a Steering Committee and authorized it to guide development of the new plan. Representing a broad cross-section of interests (21), the Committee adopted a four-phase process, based on the following questions: Where are we now? Where are we going?, Where do we want to be? How do we get there? (20).

During 1996, as part of its efforts to conduct a ‘community-based issue analysis’ (as noted in Table 1) and to answer its first question, the Steering Committee commissioned a statistically valid survey of over 400 Banff households, an environmental background report, and a report analyzing development and land use. In 1998, an analysis of future residential needs and potential residential supply in the town was completed. Forecasting exercises, development of future scenarios, and an extensive public participation program were used to address the remaining questions.

In order to establish a shared community vision, and in accordance with their terms of reference, the Steering Committee emphasized public participation throughout development of the *Banff Community Plan*. The first opportunity for Banff residents to contribute to the *Plan* was through the householder survey noted above. A 2-day public workshop followed (12–13 June, 1996), during which time additional community concerns and suggested strategies for dealing with the issues raised in the householder survey were solicited from over 220 participants.

Based on the householder survey and public workshop responses, and with input from a ‘visioning’ process undertaken by the town’s advisory committees, the planning team developed four alternative future development scenarios and presented them at a 2-day open house (27–28 November, 1996). Comments received at the open house identified the degree of public support for each scenario and preferences for the rate and quantity of future growth in Banff. Newsletters, newspaper articles, display panels and a telephone hotline also helped inform the public and elicit their comments. Residents contributed in a variety of ways; for example, 97 residents returned a newspaper insert with their comments on what they liked and disliked about each of the four scenarios.

### Federal Approval of the Banff Community Plan

As the primary long-range planning instrument designed to direct the future of the municipality, the *Banff Community Plan* states the community’s goals, objectives and planning philosophy. However, because the *Incorporation Act* granted Parks Canada final authority over adoption of the *Banff Community Plan*, other planning and land use documents were consulted in its development, principally the 1997 *Banff National Park Management Plan* and the 1996 *Banff-Bow Valley Task Force Report*. The *Park Management Plan*, for instance, not only set the Park management direction but also identified specific issues and goals for the town of Banff to address (see ‘action planning’ in Table 1). Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage, required that the *Plan* contain bylaws addressing such issues as the ‘need to reside’ (22), protection of heritage buildings, streetscapes and architectural design.

In April, 1997, a draft *Banff Community Plan* was reviewed publicly at an open house and in May, a legally required public hearing was held. By June 1997, Banff Town Council had submitted an approved *Plan* (Bylaw 159) and an environmental impact statement to the Minister of Canadian Heritage for approval. The *Plan* reflected Banff residents’ wishes for significantly less commercial development than allowed under 1997 regulations, a slower rate of commercial growth, and somewhat less residential density. On 16 September, 1997, Sheila Copps wrote the Mayor of Banff, indicating that additional action had to be taken on 12 items ranging from a program to monitor annual residential growth to identification of appropriate use guidelines for commercial areas (20).

Following a public review of these required changes, a revised *Community Plan* and a land-use bylaw were submitted to the Minister in June 1998. However, on 26 June, 1998, the Minister announced amendments to the *Banff National Park Management Plan*. Banff Town Council was required to bring the *Banff Community Plan* into compliance with these amendments before the *Plan* would be approved. Finally, on 3 December, 1998, the Minister of Canadian Heritage approved the *Banff Community Plan*.

### Community Vision for Banff

What does the *Banff Community Plan* contain? The vision for the town of Banff, expressed by the community throughout the public participation process, can be summarized into 3 major, interrelated themes: (i) Banff: a sustainable National Park Community; (ii) Banff: a balanced community; and (iii) Banff: an improving and involved community (20). Selected details of each theme are provided (Table 2) to illustrate the requirement and the capability of Banff to provide the elements that support a community that is socially, environmentally, culturally, and financially in balance.

Thirteen primary goals are identified in the *Banff Community Plan* including those focused on management of growth and development within town boundaries, environmental protection, heritage preservation and development quality, residential and commercial land use, tourism and economy, transportation and parking, utilities and infrastructure, and regional integration.

Table 2. Banff Community vision: Selected details of major themes.

Community Plan Themes	Selected details of themes
<b>1. Banff: a sustainable National Park community</b>	<p><i>A sustainable national park community is one that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflects fundamental principles of National Parks mandate</li> <li>• is a leader in environmental matters</li> <li>• exemplifies sustainable development and sustainable tourism</li> </ul> <p><i>A sustainable community means that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• services and infrastructure are affordable</li> <li>• community is socially diverse; provides all residents with access to affordable housing, basic education and health care</li> <li>• no net negative environmental impact principle implemented</li> </ul>
<b>2. Banff: a balanced Community</b>	<p><i>A balanced community is characterized by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adequate supply of affordable housing</li> <li>• commercial services/facilities meet appropriate use criteria</li> <li>• appropriate development levels respect natural environment</li> <li>• appropriate mix: new development, heritage preservation</li> <li>• emphasis on quality of life for residents and visitors</li> <li>• balance of vehicular and pedestrian traffic</li> <li>• appropriate tourism that operates in a balanced social and environmental framework</li> </ul>
<b>3. Banff: an improving and involved community</b>	<p><i>An improving and involved community means that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banff residents care deeply about their town</li> <li>• they desire to find “made in Banff” solutions to problems and desired improvements</li> <li>• Banff Community Plan provides a structured process of monitoring, information dissemination and citizen participation to enable residents to take an active role in achieving goals of the Plan</li> </ul>

These goals form the issue areas which must be addressed to meet community needs (Table 1). The *Plan* describes the intent of each goal or issue, provides a statement of the underlying philosophy adopted by the town of Banff and notes a set of specific objectives for each issue area (20). Three goals, the statements of intent accompanying them, and illustrations of their objectives are highlighted in Table 3.

### Integral Principles of the Banff Community Plan

Although they remained under development in late 1999, the 'no net negative environmental impact' and 'appropriate development and use' principles are integral and precedent-setting elements of the *Banff Community Plan*. Established by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the no net negative environmental impact means that future development should be based on improving the environment. Achieving this condition involves a shared responsibility among *Parks Canada*, the community, private sector, individual visitors and residents.

Such actions as leadership in environmental stewardship, and mitigation of individual development projects in accordance with the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, are among the actions expected to attain the no net negative environmental impact principle. Baseline and periodic monitoring of indicators and stressors (such as population, water demand, traffic volume, energy consumption, and ambient noise levels and light intensities), and application of the appropriate development and use principle, also are important actions designed to reach the no net negative environmental impact objective (R. McKay 1999, pers. comm.). A key feature of the *Banff Community Plan* is an annual monitoring system that will produce a yearly "State of the Town" report. This report is to be presented to the public through a forum such as an annual Town Hall Meeting where both the achievements of the preceding year and priorities for the coming year will be discussed.

The 1990 *Incorporation Agreement* requires that businesses licenced in Banff must meet certain basic criteria. Businesses must assist the town either (i) "to serve, as its primary function, as a centre for visitors to the Park and to provide such visitors with accommodation and other goods and services", or (ii) "to provide a comfortable living community for those persons who



Tatanga Ridge, a new housing development in Banff townsite. Photo: D. Draper.

need to reside in the townsite in order to achieve its primary function". Business licences will be issued only if businesses meet these broad 'appropriate use' guidelines. (Note the continued focus on service to visitors as a prime justification for business development in Banff).

The appropriate development and use principle and its associated Appropriate Business Licence Review process remains the subject of much debate in Banff. While all legal dimensions have not yet been resolved, the intent of this principle is that new business applications and development proposals will be considered only if they are appropriate to the community and its setting in a national park. Certain types of businesses (such as Las Vegas-type casinos) that do not serve visitors coming for a national park experience, would not be expected to locate in Banff. Examples of those services deemed appropriate for Banff and other national parks are identified in Table 4.

In early 1999, Banff's Town Council received a draft Appropriate Use Framework for consideration. Developed by Town

Table 3. Selected goals and objectives of the Banff Community Plan.

Goals and Statement of Intent	Objectives (Selected)
<b>Growth and Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to manage the quantity, type and rate of growth and development within the legislated Town boundaries, to maintain Banff as a sustainable National Park community</li> </ul>	<b>Growth and Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to approve a new bylaw which establishes rates of growth and development densities consistent with limited commercial growth</li> <li>to annually monitor quantity and rate of growth and development in conjunction with monitoring of the no net negative environmental impact principle, quality of life, economic health and other indicators</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Protection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to provide a quality environment for the co-existence of humans and nature</li> </ul>	<b>Environmental Protection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to develop the town of Banff as a model environmental and National Park community</li> <li>to work with Parks Canada to create a monitoring system to address the no net negative environmental impact principle</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism and Economy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to maintain a healthy and sustainable tourism-based economy structured on the natural and cultural heritage of the region</li> </ul>	<b>Tourism and Economy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to participate in and support a Heritage Tourism Strategy</li> <li>to continue to encourage a stable economy and career opportunities based on year round tourism and other economic activity based on Banff's natural setting</li> </ul>

Source: Council of the Town of Banff (20).

Table 4. Examples of appropriate services in Banff and other National Parks.

- Emergency services: police, fire, ambulance, rescue
- interpretation, heritage education, information
- accommodation: campgrounds, hostels, bed and breakfasts, hotels
- retail outlets selling basic items such as toiletries, non-prescription medicines, newspapers etc.
- retail outlets offering heritage products such as photographic supplies; outdoor clothing, climbing, skiing and hiking equipment; books on the area's nature, history and culture; Canadian arts and crafts that celebrate protected areas in Canada
- food services, including bakeries and restaurants
- meeting facilities that: (i) are a secondary use of facilities whose main purpose is to provide accommodation, (ii) are appropriate in size to the hotel, and (iii) play a major role in heritage tourism
- basic financial services
- liquor store
- medical services: clinics, hospitals
- transportation: bus, taxi, rental cars
- opportunities for adventure learning
- public laundromat, showers
- postal services

Source: After Canadian Heritage Parks Canada. 1999. Draft Consultation Summary, Lake Louise Community Plan. Canadian Heritage, Ottawa, ON.



Balancing tourism development and environmental protection will help ensure sustainability of viewsapes such as that of Moraine Lake. Photo: D. Draper.

staff in conjunction with Parks Canada, the purpose of the Framework is to ensure that businesses, and their services, products and facilities, will serve basic public needs and will relate directly to provision of understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the natural and cultural heritage of national parks. If a new business intends to be licenced in Banff, it must first pass a test of appropriateness. As of late 1999, this test requires that a business will: (i) be located in the town; (ii) contribute to a vibrant Heritage Tourism industry; (iii) be appropriate to a World Heritage Site; (iv) provide required community service; (v) be a permissible Park activity; and (vi) not be a value-added process for production of products or services to be sold elsewhere (R. McKay 1999, pers. comm.). Existing businesses that fail to meet a test of appropriateness will be permitted to continue. However, amendments to the Banff Business Licence Bylaw will ensure new businesses meet the criteria, including *Banff National Park Management Plan* criteria, and aspire to the purposes of the town as well as the Banff Bow Valley Heritage Tourism Strategy.

If the Town Council were to support the Appropriate Use Framework in principle, an Open House would be held, in conjunction with Parks Canada, to solicit public input on the proposed working model of the Framework. Once received, this public input would be considered along with all other available information, and a final Framework would be presented to Council as part of an amendment to the Business Licence Bylaw. The significance of this Framework goes beyond the town of Banff: it is anticipated that the Framework will be used in other national park communities once adopted by Banff.

One other precedent-setting action evolved from the efforts to balance tourism development and environmental protection in Banff. The *Banff Community Plan* recommended a commercial growth rate of 1.5% annually, averaged over 3 years. At that growth rate, commercial build-out (the maximum increase in commercial infrastructure permissible within town boundaries and by permitted land-use designations) could occur by the year 2006 (20). In order to distribute commercial developmental activity over time, town administrators determined that only about

4645.16 m<sup>2</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup> would be allocated through commercial development permits until build-out was reached.

The annual development permit application process requires potential developers to complete an appropriate use review form as well as to provide other information that is reviewed by the town administration. Each application is subjected to a critical preliminary review to ensure proposed developments comply with land use bylaw criteria and natural historic heritage standards. In 1999, the first year that town administrators limited the space available for commercial development, 11 applications were received. Of 8 major projects, only 5 met the town's criteria for appropriate use. On 29 March, 1999, Banff made history when an independent auditor randomly selected 3 of these pre-approved development applications in Canada's first lottery-style draw for commercial use development allotments.

Through this lottery, 2 development projects received the full-space allotment requested and 1 project received 15% of the space requested. The selected developers were required to apply to the Municipal Planning Commission for development permits and, if successful, were to build their projects within 1 year. The project that received the 15% allotment was permitted to bank the m<sup>2</sup> allocated and to accumulate more space through an automatic entry into the draw to be held in the year 2000.

Each of the no net negative environmental impact and appropriate development and use principles, as well as the development allocation lottery, was directed at the need to anticipate and accommodate the future of the town of Banff as a balanced and sustainable mountain community based primarily on the tourism industry. As part of the *Banff Community Plan*, these and other related actions constitute a 'made in Banff' solution to the problem of balancing development and conservation of mountain resources. It is suggested that such actions are important in a global context in that they point to the positive changes and improvements that enhanced public participation can bring to governance and sustainability of local tourism resources and mountain communities. That is, the town of Banff appears to have developed public awareness and understanding, political

will and commitment, as well as the financial means to implement new governance arrangements to address the multiple dimensions of tourism in mountain regions. Banff's actions, particularly in terms of mechanisms employed to achieve continuing, productive dialogue among stakeholder groups, represent one of the changes required to implement successfully the Mountain Agenda.

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Banff National Park is held in trust for the people of Banff, Canada, and the world. Canada is attempting to fulfill this trust through improved understanding and governance, including that at the local level. A great deal of time and effort has been expended in identifying the problems facing the Park and in attempting to resolve the complicated problems touristic development has brought to the townsite. In particular, the Banff-Bow Valley Study, as well as efforts of town planning and development staff to learn from the experiences of other mountain communities facing the tensions associated with balancing development and conservation issues, have been instrumental in guiding and promoting sustainable, community-based mountain tourism within the townsite. The *Banff Community Plan*, elements of which have been discussed briefly here, is a critical document in the process of improving governance to achieve a balance between tourism development and environmental protection.

While the "days of continued growth in human use and development in the Valley are at an end" (9), the innovative and adaptive approaches undertaken by town and Park planners and managers must continue to help ensure a future of appropriate, sustainable use. Efforts to create a shared, proactive vision for the future of Banff National Park and the town of Banff have provided compelling examples of the challenges encountered in bringing together ecological, social and economic values in order to take responsibility for the community's sustainable future. Basing tourism growth management efforts on values and desires of community members is an essential element in participatory planning. Also, participatory planning likely is critical in resolving the dilemmas attached to a small mountain town such as Banff attempting to function simultaneously as a strong residential community with a high quality of life and a sustainable tourist destination resort. Commitment to ongoing communication with, and participation of, Banff community stakeholders provides a fundamental basis for continued progress toward achieving the benefits of sustainable tourism.

As noted in Agenda 21, and as implemented through Local Agenda 21 initiatives, global aspirations of the Earth Summit toward sustainability are likely to be achieved largely at the local level and through local government policies. Recent planning and other actions undertaken in the quest for a sustainable mountain community and a sustainable tourism economy in the mature tourism destination of Banff suggest there are policy directions that enable achievement of these sometimes elusive goals. By taking steps to shift decision-making away from an exclusive focus on market economy principles toward inclusion of wider social and community objectives, in particular through the precedent-setting principles identified above, the town of Banff appears to have identified ways of implementing several elements of the Mountain Agenda (Chapter 13 of Agenda 21). The role of significant community participation and continuing, open dialogue among stakeholders, including those who traditionally have not been heard, has been vital in working toward balancing tourism development and environmental protection in Banff. These same elements are important in generating positive change toward the long-term, sustainable future of mountain communities and regions and in perpetuating the international spirit of the Mountain Agenda.

## References and Notes

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- Parks Canada* is the agency granted authority under the National Parks Act (last amended in 1988) to manage and administer national parks and to establish and maintain park communities, facilities and services. Reflecting the current public policy thrust toward preservation of the parks for future generations, Parks Canada's mandate is derived from Section 4 of the National Parks Act: "Parks are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education, and enjoyment, subject to the provisions of this Act and Regulations, and such Parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." Section 5 of the 1988 amendment to the National Parks Act emphasizes the importance of ecological integrity in decision making: "Maintenance of ecological integrity through the protection of natural resources shall be the first priority when considering Park zoning and visitor use in a management plan."
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- Eligible residents are defined by the *Lease and Licence of Occupation Regulations* pursuant to the *National Parks Act*. Drawn from past legislation, the commonly used 'need to reside' clause, was replaced with 'eligible resident' and refers to an individual who is eligible to reside in a national park. Phrases defining an 'eligible resident' include: (a) an individual whose primary employment is in the park, and (b) an individual who operates a business in the park and whose presence at the place of business is necessary for the day-to-day operation of the business. Source: Hodgins, D. 1996. *Governance and Land Management: Task Force Discussion Paper*. Prepared for the Banff-Bow Valley Study Task Force, Banff, Alberta.
- Acknowledgements: I would like to thank Mr. Robin Poitras, Department of Geography, University of Calgary, for his preparation of Figures 1 and 2 and other technical assistance.

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