

Kick-Off Community Info Sessions – Canmore Health & Wellness Facility

Date - May 8, 2024
Times - 2 – 4 p.m. – 108 attendees
6 – 8 p.m. – 55 attendees
Location - Bill Warren Training Centre
Format - Information boards with project team available for discussion and questions
(Frank Kernick, Serge Ouimette, Dr. Cheryl Cooper, Amy McDonald, Randall McKay, Kayla Kernick)
20 min. presentation with 60 min. open forum for questions and comments

Commitments/Stated Intentions

The project team has committed to, or stated their intentions around, the following:

- Sending the presentation material shared on May 8, 2024, via email to those who have provided their email addresses.
- Posting all reports, studies, and relevant documentation to the project website as soon as it is live. Additionally, the project team will try to post draft reports for review and comment whenever possible.
- Respecting the democratic and legislative process of the Town of Canmore Council, duly elected by the community, and would not request the Province of Alberta to supersede the authority or decision-making powers of Council should they not support an amendment to the Municipal Development Plan (MDP).
- Sending the initial undermining report to anyone who requests it.
- Not developing on the east side of the slope. Nothing will be developed below the cliff line and no easements will be requested.
- Maintaining and protecting the trail along the highway. The intention is to improve, not take away, existing recreational uses and amenities.
- Exploring the possibility of not turning unused lands back to the province but working with the Town and Province on an approach that serves the community.
- Listening to local experts and sharing their input and comments with the project’s engineering consultants. All input, consideration and concerns can be emailed directly to the team, and it will be passed on.
- Having a member of the project team walk the site with anyone interested in doing so.
- Designing the site so that the principal access is off the highway.

Questions and Answers

The Land

How did the project team secure this land?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Province of Alberta has a well-established system for allowing for use of Crown lands, including tools such as leases and other authorizations and approvals. The <i>Public Lands Act</i> is the main statute that governs provincial public lands under the administration of Alberta Environment and Parks (or AEP). You can read more about the Public Lands Formal Disposition Application Process here.• The Alberta government recognizes that commercial and recreation projects on public lands contribute to job growth and economic diversification and align with their long-term tourism strategy.• A common objective of both the Alberta government and industry is to meet the needs and exceed the expectations of visitors through market-driven tourism development.
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Please explain the parameters of the lease.	In 2019, the Government of Alberta notified municipalities of an amendment to the Public Lands Administration Regulation (PLAR) to create a new type of disposition for tourism and commercial recreation activities on public lands and a maximum term length of 60 years. The increased maximum term length from the previous maximum tenure length of 25 years was done to improve access to investment or individuals and business interested in pursuing tourism or commercial recreation development on public land. As such, the lease on the subject lands is for 60 years, with an option to renew for another 60 years. There is an annual lease fee, and the disposition holder is also responsible for property taxes and any local improvement charges.
Why is this the right location for this project?	<p>The land secured for this project proposal is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - located within the Town of Canmore Urban Growth Boundary - not identified as being located in a designated wildlife corridor - not identified as being located in a designated habitat patch - a previously disturbed brownfield site - accessible directly from Highway 742 (Spray Lakes Road) - unlikely to have significant visual impact on surrounding residential areas.
If you only use nine of the 18 acres, what happens to the rest?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is anticipated the project will likely be developed on approximately half of the land leased (9-12 of the 18.28 acres). • Encouraged by community input, the project team will be exploring the possibility of retaining the 6 - 9 acres for community benefit.
Is this land part of a wildlife corridor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As shown on the Town of Canmore Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Map 4, this land is not designated as wildlife corridor by the Town of Canmore or Province. That is not to say that there isn't wildlife in the area. • The project team is conducting their due diligence as it relates to wildlife management and potential impacts. A review of the land is being undertaken by our environmental consulting team to identify and assesses the environmental significance and sensitivity of the lands, and to recommend appropriate measures for protecting environmental features.
Undermining is a significant concern – what are you doing to identify and mitigate that risk?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We understand the significant factor that undermining will play in this project and our engineers will be looking at it from all angles. • We will be transparent with the findings of the studies conducted, and about the level of risk. We don't want to undertake a project that presents a significant chance of unanticipated risk and uncertainty. • Thurber Engineering Ltd. has been engaged to initiate the required geotechnical studies and undermining assessments.

The Concept

What do you plan to build?	The project is in the early stages of planning, but our intention is to build a health and wellness facility, a small boutique hotel (less than 100 rooms), and staff housing to accommodate employees.
What do you mean by 'health and wellness facility'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary focus of a health and wellness retreat is holistic health and self-improvement. The facility may offer various programs and activities aimed at improving physical, mental, and emotional well-being. They may include activities such as yoga, meditation, nutritional workshops, mindfulness practices, and outdoor excursions. • Structured programs are often offered as well, and may include a combination of holistic therapies, fitness activities, educational workshops, and healthy meals tailored to promote overall wellness. • Health and wellness retreats are often located, like this one will be, in serene and natural environments such as mountains, forests, or beachfront locations, allowing participants to reconnect with nature and find inner peace. • The atmosphere at a health and wellness retreat is peaceful, supportive, and focused on personal growth and transformation. Participants are encouraged to disconnect from technology, practice mindfulness, and engage in self-reflection.
Will this facility include medical aesthetics?	No. Botox and other medical aesthetics do not align with the vision for the facility and will not be a part of the service offerings.
What has already been decided and confirmed?	The only aspect of the project that is confirmed is the location. The lease has been approved and the project team is committed to developing this site once approvals have been granted through the legislated municipal planning process.
What is planned in terms of staff housing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff housing will be designed to accommodate the need in accordance with the requirements of the Town of Canmore, which will be determined by the size and scope of the hotel and health & wellness facility. • Ideally, we hope to offer a range of housing types to meet the needs of a variety of staff from those with moderate income and higher income health & wellness practitioners and professionals.
What about parking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We hope that staff and the community will access the facility using ROAM transit that is now operational on Highway 742 (Spray Lakes Road) as of May 17, 2023, but it is acknowledged that onsite parking is also required to serve guests and clientele. The plan is to have surface parking for day users of the health & wellness facility, and underground parking for the hotel. • The parking will be screened with vegetation and not highly visible.

Impacts

Will there be significant construction-related impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As with any type of land development, there will be short-term impacts due to the construction of this development. The project will abide by all municipal bylaws and regulations, including mandated work hours and noise restrictions. There will be some ground compaction and soil tamping during the initial phases of construction. As construction of the health and wellness facility may be phased, we anticipated construction will take approximately one to two years per phase. We will make sure that all impacts are proactively communicated with the community and mitigated as much as is possible.
Won't this have a significant impact on the water resources of the area, at a time when drought is a serious concern?	Water is intended to be a small component of the design and service offering. Similar to Spring Creek Mountain Village, this project will prioritize reducing and re-using the water needed as part of our sustainability plan, including geoexchange. Passive solar design will also support geoexchange heating and cooling efficiency and economics. The intent is to employ environmentally conscious water management practices as much as possible.
How will this facility impact other health and wellness practitioners in Canmore?	All health practitioners operate within private enterprise and competition is to be expected. That said, we expect that our facilities will enhance the options that these practitioners can suggest to their clients and give them access to technology and treatments that might not otherwise be available.
How will you minimize human/bear interactions?	For the safety of all wildlife and our clients, portions of the area will be fenced in and the recommendations for Improving Human-Wildlife Coexistence in the Bow Valley report will be implemented on site to the greatest extent possible.

Involved Parties


What is the government's involvement with this project?	The only involvement of the Provincial government is the granting of the disposition of the land and tourism and commercial lease. There is no other provincial investment.
Who are the principal players in this project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At present, there are only two principal shareholders involved - Frank Kernick and Serge Ouimette. Dr. Cheryl Cooper will act as Managing Director of the wellness facility and Amy McDonald has been retained to provide design, programming and consultation services as it relates to that facility. Randall McKay, MCIP, ACP has been contracted as an urban planning consultant to prepare and process the amendment to the Town of Canmore Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and drafting of the proposed Direct Control (DC) District.

Alignment, Benefit, Need

<p>How does this development align with Canmore's stated priorities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In setting a land use vision for the subject lands, the MDP amendment will build upon the vision of the existing MDP goal to <i>"To allow opportunities for private recreational and tourism amenities that support the Town's economic development goals."</i> • Council, resident, and stakeholder input will be used to help inform the proposed amendment to the MDP and new DC District development regulations, with consideration being given to Town of Canmore Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025, the goals and objectives of the Canmore Kananaskis Community Tourism Strategic Plan 2019-2029, Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, responsible growth and development, environmental stewardship, and financial sustainability. <p>The key guiding principles are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responsible growth and development ▪ Acknowledging neighbourhood context ▪ Environmental stewardship and protection ▪ Tourism development and economic prosperity ▪ Interconnected trails, green spaces, and public open spaces ▪ A balance between the built and natural environment ▪ Fiscally sustainable development ▪ Sustainability and green design ▪ Partnerships and collaboration
<p>What's the benefit to the community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic diversification - direct employment in the community, spin-off businesses such as transportation, suppliers, growth in local services. • Increased disposable incomes - improved standard of living. • Enhanced municipal tax base. • Culture of enterprise - encourages more businesses to develop and contribute to job growth and economic diversification. • This project is consistent with policy direction outlined in the Town of Canmore's MDP and Land Use Bylaw. • Community access to a new suite of health and wellness services, treatments, and technology not currently available. The goal is for this to be considered a community asset, and we intend to offer community pricing on programs and service offerings. • An opportunity for Canmore to build on its world-renowned reputation as a sport tourism destination by incorporating nature-based health and wellness into its offering. By taking a holistic approach to travel, wellness tourism seeks to nurture the body, mind, and soul.
<p>Aren't there other spas currently under development in the area?</p>	<p>There are other spa facilities being planned and developed in the area, but these are, as far as we know, strictly "spa" facilities and will have a very different service offering than nature and type of the comprehensive health & wellness facility planned for this site.</p>

Why are you not building affordable housing when the need is so great?	A housing development on this land was not an option given by the Province. The only housing we can and will build is staff housing for employees.
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Next Steps

What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information sessions on May 8 were just the beginning of many community conversations and consultations to come. You may see some activity onsite throughout the summer as we initiate soil testing and other preliminary assessments. We plan on reaching back out to the community in the fall, ideally with study results, defined areas for the different facilities, preliminary concept drawings, and a better understanding of the constraints, opportunities, and potential impacts. Prior to going to Town of Canmore Council, we will hold a minimum of one more open house for community input.
What is the approval process for getting this development through Council?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review is expected to take approximately eight (8) to ten (10) months, depending on the complexity of the issues identified and time needed to complete the technical analysis of the site and project. The review process consists of the following three main phases.  <pre> graph LR A[PHASE 1 Project Initiation & Planning] --> B[PHASE 2 Engagement & Policy Development] B --> C[PHASE 3 Council Review & Approval] </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data gathering and completion of technical studies to provide an informed analysis for the development of the MDP Amendment and new Direct Control (DC) District. Continued community consultation on the draft plan including stakeholder collaboration and engagement with relevant committees of council and community groups. Preparation of draft MDP Amendment new Direct Control (DC) District based on public and stakeholder feedback and comments. Present draft MDP Amendment and new Direct Control (DC) District to Council for First Reading. Public Hearing. Present decision ready drafts to Council for Second Reading. Present decision ready drafts to Council for Third Reading.