

Practice Name:**Date Created:** 26-May-09**Author:****Last Updated:****Abstract:****GENERAL INFORMATION**

Name of Practice	Sustainability Screening Report (SSR) Process
Date	19-June-08
Name of Municipality	Town of Canmore
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THE ISSUE**Abstract:**

What is the practice you developed or are developing (brief abstract)?

Please briefly describe the final practice developed. (e.g. if you developed a new Council agenda, list the agenda items, or if a new communications plan was created, provide a summary of the plan's goals, objectives and

highlights.)

Sustainability Screening Report (SSR) Process

This process requires applicants for statutory plan amendments and subdivision and development permits to provide a detailed description of how their project will provide a net environmental, social, and economic benefit to Canmore. The report provides opportunities for more public participation in the development process and allows Council to evaluate each individual application based on its ability to demonstrate its impact on overall community sustainability.

Need:

Please describe (just a couple of sentences or bullet points) why you needed to create this practice (policy or process).

What issue made it necessary? (e.g. “We needed a comprehensive plan to deal with...”, or “We needed an annual forecasting tool because...”)

The town of Canmore has been under extreme development pressure for well over a decade. Due to geographical and environmental constraints - being surrounded by provincial parks - the town has a limited development footprint. With a limited land base there is a limited window of opportunity – through the next 10-15 years perhaps – for the Town to influence the type of development that occurs in Canmore. Town Council recognized an opportunity to minimize the potentially negative impact of development and ensure the net community benefit of any future developments. The Sustainability Screening Reports process is an effort to protect Canmore’s beautiful natural environment and the long term sustainability of the community. As a result, developers and builders have recognized the benefits of utilizing green technologies and the community responsibility that accompanies development.

CREATING YOUR PRACTICE

Research:

How did you obtain information to help design your practice (including consultation with stakeholders, formal and informal research)?

Please include any research documentation you can share, or give us a source reference (e.g. Web site, literature, “We reviewed the bylaws from other municipalities in the area...”).

The SSR process was modeled on a number of similar processes employed by other municipalities. Primary sources used in creating Canmore's Sustainability Screening Reports were:

Port Coquitlam "Sustainability Checklist"

New Westminster "Smart Growth Development Checklist"

AUMA, "Municipal Sustainability Planning Guidelines"

City of Halifax, "Sustainability Analysis using the Natural Step Framework"

Strathcona County, "Integrating Sustainability into Development Planning"

Resort Municipality of Whistler's "2020 Moving Toward a Sustainable Future Fraser River Basin's "Charter for Sustainability"

For adapting a process relevant to Canmore, the Town's Community Vision "Mining the Future, the 1998 Municipal Development Plan (particularly "Vision" from PART 3) and the Town's adoption of "The Natural Step program were all utilized.

Process:

How did you go about designing your practice? For instance, did you create a team, hire a consultant, borrow something ready-made from another jurisdiction?

Describe briefly who did the design work and what process they followed.

The idea came from a Strategic Planning conversation between the Mayor, Council, and senior staff. The goal was to find a way to bring the community's "Mining the Future" vision to life in a tangible way. A two person Administrative team from Planning and Engineering was tasked with development of a Sustainability Screening Report process. Over a 6 month period those two staff worked together and brought the evolving process to department meetings for feedback and contributions. Briefing notes periodically went to Council during the development phase.

In November of 2006 Council passed a motion approving a draft and directing Administration to talk to interest groups. Several meetings with various interest groups were held and the feedback was incorporated. The process went back to Council for feedback two more times before it was approved on July 3, 2007.

GETTING APPROVAL FOR YOUR PRACTICE

Authority:

Whose/what approval did you need to create and implement the practice?

Canmore's Town Council provided direction to the Planning and Development Department to develop a process. Council was also the approval body for the Sustainability Screening Report process. Drafts of the process went to Council 4 times before it was approved.

Reporting:

How did you inform the decision-maker(s) about the practice and your need for their approval?

Please note the name of any documents provided to the decision-makers that you would be willing to share.

Council was informed about the practice through strategic planning sessions with Administration and through the public meeting process. Administration prepared a staff report explaining the process and attached relevant documents. The staff report and SSR process are included in this package for further reference.

Consultation:

Did you consult with stakeholders as part of your approval process?

If so, how? If possible, attach a copy of templates, surveys or other documents you used as part of your consultation.

The largest stakeholder group in Canmore is the Bow Valley Builders and Developers Association (BOWDA). The biggest barrier or challenge to the success of both of these programs was the resistance from the development community, who felt that the program would unnecessarily slow down processes while also creating more work and the potential for lost revenue for builders and developers. The Town of Canmore included representatives from BOWDA in the creation and implementation of the program and has worked with the organization to create buy in and support. There has been a positive acceptance of the program in the development community overall.

IMPLEMENTING YOUR PRACTICE

Plan:

Describe the process you went through to implement the practice. If you used an implementation plan, please note it here.

In addition to coverage in the local papers, Administration met with the development industry and BOWDA, inviting them to attend a session where the implementation process was described.

Administration also put together an “overview” memo with a step-by-step process that applicants received when applying for permits. A copy of this overview is attached to this application.

Policy:

What changes to bylaws, regulations or procedures were needed to implement this practice and how did you deal with them?

Please attach a copy of the change in bylaw, policy or procedure.

Several Town of Canmore Municipal Development Plan (MDP) policies were amended to recognize that an SSR is required for amendments to the MDP and that an SSR may be required as part of subdivision and development permit applications.

The Town’s Land Use Bylaw (LUB) was amended to require an SSR to amend the LUB and also added to the information requirements section to state that in accordance with the Sustainability Screening Policy, an SSR is required for complete development permit applications

When:

When did your municipality begin to use the practice?
Was it implemented all at once or in stages?

The Sustainability Screening Report process was adopted by Canmore's Town Council on July 3, 2007. It was fully implemented by September of 2007. The SSR process is a long term way for the community to ensure that development in the community preserves, protects, enhances, and sustains Canmore's environment.

Who:

Who was responsible for implementing the practice?

If someone else is responsible for ongoing management, who is it?

The Planning and Development Department, the Municipal Clerk, and Council are all responsible for implementation and ongoing management of the SSR process. The Sustainability Screening Reports (SSR) review and approval process has five steps (see supplementary materials for details):

1. An applicant is advised at the initial pre-application meeting with Planning & Development if the proposal is subject to screening. At this time the applicant is provided with a copy of the SSR process and is advised of the requirements for completing an SSR.

2. The SSR is completed and submitted to the Municipal Clerk by the applicant.

3. Council Review and Public Process: Following receipt of an SSR for a statutory plan the Municipal Clerk schedules a public meeting. The SSR is passed on to Planning and Development who prepare Administrative comments for the public meeting. The application is placed on the Town's website and the date for the public meeting is advertised. The public meeting provides an opportunity for the applicant to present the community benefits of the proposal to Council and the public. Comments and questions from the general public are encouraged at the public meeting.

4. Following the public meeting and/or other public process, Council advises the applicant whether or not the SSR is acceptable. If the SSR and/or application must be postponed for further clarification, the SSR is resubmitted to Council at a future date for review and approval. An application will continue to be deemed incomplete until any required changes to an SSR and/or application have been approved by Council.

5. When Council has approved an SSR, Administration brings the application back to the relevant authority for a decision (first reading, approval, refusal) on the application.

RESOURCES REQUIRED**Budget:**

How much did it cost you to design and implement your practice (i.e. We saved/spent \$XX per year)?

What are your ongoing operational and capital costs, if any?

Staff:

What human resources did you need to design, implement and manage your practice? (e.g. "It took X staff member (s) X months on this" or "This is part of normal staff duties.")

Infrastructure:

What "capital costs" (such as information technology, other equipment or building assets) did you need to design, implement, manage, and/or evaluate your practice?

Approximately 200 hours of staff time has been used for design, implementation, and maintenance of the Sustainability Screening Report process. The work was considered part of the Planning and Development Department's normal workload.

Managing the SSR process is part of the normal staff duties for the staff in the Planning and Development Department and the Municipal Clerk.

There were no capital costs associated with this process.

EVALUATING YOUR PRACTICE**Formal:**

If you did a formal evaluation (e.g. user satisfaction survey, analysis of annual expenditures or number of rate payers served) for your practice, please describe the evaluation tool and the process used.

Tell us who was involved.

When the process was adopted by Council in July 2007 Administration told Council that they would monitor the process to see how it was working for Town staff and for applicants. Administration said they would report back to Council on this. This monitoring led to some fine-tuning changes in the paper process as we went along.

Informal:

If you did an informal evaluation, describe what you did (such as discussing the practice with people in the office or on the street, or letters/comments received).

The informal evaluation involved discussion with the proponents who have been through the process, expressed opinions and comments from the local Builders and Developers Association (BOWDA), consultation with "The Vision Keepers", a volunteer citizen committee tasked with ensuring that the Town moves consistently toward the community vision, and through feedback from staff members and Council members who have been through the process.

Performance measures:

Please list the performance measures for this practice (i.e. reduced number of complaints, money saved, or change in equipment life expectancy.)

Please list the process you used for measuring performance, (i.e. We do annual surveys on...) examples

include:

- collecting data
- establishing a baseline
- applying the measures
- results
- follow up

The performance measures for this practice are measurable increases in environmental, social, and economic benefit to Canmore's community. The Planning and Development Department track each SSR and monitor follow up to ensure that the commitments made are followed through. Since the Sustainability Screening Report process was adopted, several environmental, social, and economic initiatives have been approved by Council:

Environmental:

- 3 Built Green "Gold" Developments
- 1 Built Green "Silver" Development
- Non potable irrigation
- Storm water retention for landscaping
- 5-6 staff from development industry sent to "The Natural Step" training
- Permeable Asphalt
- Solar Thermal Panels
- Xeriscaping
- Daylighting
- Trail network
- Purchaser information package
- Bearsmart information

Social:

- \$1,004,000 contributed to the Town's Perpetually Affordable Housing (PAH) fund
- 25 entry level housing units
- PAH to be dedicated based on purchase of current residents
- 60 units of Attainable housing
- Employee housing
- Formal "adoption" of the community Daycare for 2 years
- \$100,000 contributed to the local community Daycare
- The purchase of 2-2 bedroom employee housing units
- \$5000/year for 5 years to the local Arts and Artisans Guild and the local Library
- 10-15 computers for the library
- \$350,000 funding over three years to the Canmore Community Coop Workshop and Gallery

Economic:

- Potential for \$8.5million in local wages

Changes:

(a) Based on the evaluation (formal or informal), describe any changes you have made, or would like to make, to your practice as a result. (e.g. "After implementing this practice, we decided that it would be better if...")

-or-

(b) Has your practice met your expectations and if so, how?

On June 24th, Town Council approved a Sustainability Checklist to more clearly define the guidelines for applications through a weighting and scoring system illustrating the relative importance the Town currently places on various components of the Social Fabric, Economic Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship components of sustainability. The checklist will serve as a shorthand tool to evaluate an applicant's SSR.

LESSONS LEARNED / BENEFITS RECEIVED

Benefits:

What are the benefits of this practice to your municipality? (eg. Preparation of Council agenda packages now requires less time, etc.)

The primary purpose of the Sustainability Screening Report process is to provide an applicant with an opportunity to describe how their project will provide a net benefit to the community of Canmore. Each applicant is asked to comment on the “triple bottom line” of Canmore’s environmental, social, and economic ideals, based on the community’s vision for the future. The result of these reports is that environmental stewardship, social fabric, and economic sustainability initiatives are in the forefront for the applicant and the public. Additionally, the reports are used to inform the town’s decision-making bodies when planning and development proposals are being reviewed. Only after Council has approved a Sustainability Screening Report are applications for statutory plans, land use bylaw amendments, and eligible subdivision and development permits deemed complete and ready for further review and processing by the Town. The result is that the development industry is thinking about sustainability throughout their projects. The Sustainability Screening Report process requires that sustainability is part of the discussion from the very beginning. There must be a sustainability component at the conceptual stage of development in Canmore. This increases the likelihood that sustainability is integrated throughout a project. In addition, the Sustainability Screening Report process engages the broader community in development in a way that has never been done in Canmore. The public has an opportunity to question and comment on a development before any approval is given, creating a community that is proactive and engaged in local development.

Key Lessons:

What key lessons have you/your municipality learned through the process of:

- designing;
- obtaining approval;
- implementing; and
- evaluating your practice?

Include any problems, surprises, and unanticipated

benefits. (e.g. “We realized that we needed to spend more time...”)

As a result of the Sustainability Screening Report process, the attitudes of developers and the general community are changing. Canmore is fortunate to be benefiting from a growth in development. Developers are proposing community contributions in a manner that has never before been seen in Canmore. Community members and groups are beginning to view developers as important and generous contributors to the larger community and to a sustainable Canmore.

Advice to Municipal Peers:

What advice would you give to another municipality that is considering adopting your practice? Is there anything you might have done differently?

The SSR process has applicability beyond Canmore. It is tailored to work within our community vision and Municipal Development Plan but the basic principles used are widely applicable to municipalities throughout Canada. Other municipalities would benefit from looking for ways to merge the process with their community vision and/or Municipal Sustainability Plan.

In just one year the SSR process has generated great value to the community of Canmore. At times it has been an inspiring civic process.

PRACTICE UPDATES

New Information:

There may be some new information to add since this practice was first posted. This is especially true if:

- a new process has been implemented in your municipality;
- there are new practice evaluation results; or
- there has been a change affecting organizational direction. For example, explain how new economic conditions or a new vision/strategy affect the practice.

Please indicate those changes here. Don't forget to list any new documents that may be useful to your peers. Then go to "Other Information" to attach the new documents.

This is the initial posting so there is no new information at this time.

OTHER INFORMATION

Suggestions:

Please list relevant information sources that others might use or you would be willing to share (courses, Web sites, literature, experts).

developed a vision with 5 guiding principles. Three of those principles (environmental stewardship, social fabric, and economic sustainability) were used as the framework for the SSR process.

Council reviews each SSR in the context of the proposal, relevant policies and any previously-approved Sustainability Screening Reports applicable to the project. In addition, applicants should be familiar with the relevant policy documents (A Vision for Canmore, The Natural Step, Municipal Sustainability Planning, and Municipal Development Plan) to determine what is appropriate for a specific application. The following provides additional guidance to the contents of Sustainability Screening Reports.

Environmental Stewardship: There are two related goals in this area. One deals primarily with land development and land use types, including mixed uses, density and on-site and off-site direct impacts on natural systems such as water, wildlife & vegetation as well as the maintenance of biodiversity and ecological integrity in the Bow Valley ecosystem. Another goal addresses environmental issues such as system conditions from The Natural Step as well as “alternative” infrastructure and “green building.

Social Fabric: The principle questions relate to: housing demographics social interaction & cohesion sense of place community identity and public involvement in the application and approval process. Various levels of detail will be available at the statutory plan stage depending, for instance, on whether the proposal is a general area structure plan or a highly specific direct control amendment to the land use bylaw.

Economic Sustainability: This is divided into two broad goals - the anticipated municipal fiscal impacts on the Town as a corporation, and the broader economic impacts in the community including such standard economic impact analyses as the quality and diversity of jobs created.

Documents & Attachments:

Please attach (using the "Browse" button below) any documents you would be willing to share with others interested in your practice (e.g. a bylaw, a policy, approval documents, templates).

* Note: If you do not have an electronic copy of a document, please send Municipal Excellence a paper copy for scanning to:

Alberta Municipal Affairs
Municipal Excellence Network
17th Floor, Commerce Place
10155-102 Street
Edmonton, AB
T5J 4L4

Nominations:

Do you have any suggestions of other individuals or municipalities with municipal practices that we should add to the Municipal Excellence network? Please list their practice, municipality, and contact information.

Or, e-mail menet@gov.ab.ca and let us know about a municipal colleague that has a really good way of doing things.

Overview of SSR paper handling
SSR cover memo
SSR Submittal form
Sustainability Screening Matrix
Mining the Future Vision Executive Summary
Approved SSR Process
Approved SSR Checklist

COMMENTS

Have we missed something; anything you'd like to add to the areas we have touched on, or an area we have not mentioned? Nothing at this time.