

# LAKE LOUISE

BANFF NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

*Community Plan*  
*June 2001*



*Également offert en français*



# FOREWORD

## “Working Towards a Model National Park Community”

In the heart of the Canadian Rockies and Banff National Park, Lake Louise is an important international symbol of Canada and the national park system. It is part of the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site. Banff, like all national parks, is dedicated to preserving a special part of Canada’s natural and cultural heritage for the benefit, education and enjoyment of present and future generations. One of the biggest questions for national parks is how to clearly state the direction national parks are taking in managing development, growth and use.

In Lake Louise, growth has been carefully controlled. However because of its remarkable combination of natural features, stunning scenery, important railway history, as well as its outstanding trail system, Lake Louise is a primary destination for many visitors to Banff National Park. This is creating demands for expanded services, facilities and residential accommodation. The role of this plan is to guide change and ensure the national parks’ mandate is supported for years to come.

On June 26, 1998, principles were announced by the Minister of Canadian Heritage to guide the community planning process in Canada’s national parks. The plan has also been reviewed in light of the recommendations of the *Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada’s National Parks* which were released in the spring of 2000. These principles and recommendations have been applied in the *Lake Louise Community Plan* as follows:

### • No Net Negative Environmental Impact

The *Lake Louise Community Plan* enforces the principle of No Net Negative Environmental Impact by reducing the hamlet boundary by approximately 37% (49 hectares), rehabilitating more than 40 hectares of disturbed lands inside and outside the hamlet, developing human use strategies for the area and placing rigid conditions on all development. In addition, a monitoring framework will be implemented to gauge the health of the park in relation to the community. Based on this ongoing monitoring, the plan will be reviewed and new mitigations may be introduced if necessary.

The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA) will be rigorously applied to new development proposals and any environmental issues will be mitigated to ensure the principle of No Net Negative Environmental Impact is maintained.

### • Appropriate Use Guidelines

The *Lake Louise Community Plan* identifies a Heritage Tourism Framework that reinforces national park values. It also defines principles and specific examples of basic and essential services. Only those proposals consistent with this framework will be approved.

Expansion of interpretation and education programs for visitors and staff will be a key component of new development proposals. Beyond existing commitments, there will be no increase in commercial retail space. Existing commitments will result in a minor increase and will be focused on providing basic and essential services.

### • Responsible Growth Management

Fixed low growth and development guidelines for residential, visitor accommodation, institutional and commercial retail space have been identified in the plan. A modest increase in a range of commercial accommodation will help fill the demand for overnight services. The majority of this growth respects existing commitments. New expansion beyond these is limited. New staff housing will be limited to resolving current problems and to support expanded commercial services. Institutional growth will be limited to improvements to Parks Canada facilities, a new community center and expanded emergency services.

Growth will be phased over time. Staff housing to address current problems is proceeding and must be in place prior to any commercial and institutional expansion. Infrastructure issues and staff housing associated with commercial expansion must be addressed before occupancy permits are issued.

### • Leadership in Environmental Stewardship and Heritage Conservation

A landscape improvement strategy is a foundation of the *Lake Louise Community Plan*. This strategy will reduce non-native plant species and discourage large mammals

from entering the community. A detailed environmental stewardship strategy is identified and will help the community reduce the impact of its operation.

Important heritage structures in the community have been identified. Strict architectural and redevelopment guidelines have been created to protect these structures and the character of Lake Louise. Lease changes will be pursued to protect heritage features.

The plan will be supported by *Implementation Guidelines*. This separate document will provide detailed design guidelines and site parameters for implementing the direction in the community plan.

In shaping the direction for Lake Louise, Parks Canada relied on public input and involvement of the Lake Louise Advisory Board. The *Community Plan* is part of a sensitive, comprehensive and integrated management strategy for the Lake Louise area that began with the revised *Banff National Park Management Plan*. A transportation study, ski area guidelines and human use strategies for the park will provide additional direction.

The *Lake Louise Community Plan* is a tool that will help Parks Canada and the community make decisions that are consistent with the National Parks mandate and the vision for Banff National Park. The strategies outlined in this plan are the basis for all decisions made within the community of Lake Louise. Parks Canada supports limited, low growth that will help the community to be healthy - environmentally, socially and economically. By applying the principles in this plan, Lake Louise will continue to be a living example of national park values.

Approved by:



Sheila Copps  
Minister of Canadian Heritage

# FOREWORD



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword ..... 1

Acknowledgements ..... 2

Highlights ..... 3

Part I: Introduction

Objectives ..... 4

Context ..... 4

Scope ..... 4

Related Initiatives ..... 4

Public Consultation ..... 4

Location & Setting ..... 5

Part II: Resource Protection

A Place for Nature ..... 6

A Place for Historical and Cultural Significance ..... 8

Community Character ..... 10

Part III: Visitor and Community Services

A Place for People - Visitor Services ..... 14

A Place for Community - Services for Residents ..... 20

Part IV: Stewardship and Management

A Place for Environmental Stewardship ..... 24

Managing Growth ..... 25

Cumulative and Environmental Effects ..... 30

Historical Photograph Credits ..... 32

List of Maps

Location & Setting ..... 5

Wildlife Movement ..... 6

Existing and Proposed Boundaries ..... 7

Cultural Resources ..... 9

Land Use ..... 11

Landscape Projects ..... 12

Lower Lake Louise (Hamlet) - Existing ..... 26

Lower Lake Louise (Hamlet) - Proposed ..... 27

Upper Lake Louise - Existing ..... 29

Upper Lake Louise - Proposed ..... 29

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The preparation of this plan involved many people. There were many challenging, complex and emotional issues that needed to be addressed. Their input has resulted in helping shape this plan. A special note of thanks is extended to those who volunteered their time. The following deserve special mention:

- Representatives of the Lake Louise Advisory Board spent many countless hours providing input, discussing and communicating issues to community members and reviewing this plan as it took shape. The community of Lake Louise is fortunate to have such dedicated people representing them.

Thanks to:

David Bayne	Alan McRoberts
Larry Hoskin	Jack Pedersen
Ben Marriott	Charlie Wake

- A number of environmental groups, concerned citizens and residents care deeply about Lake Louise, the quality of life and the environmental health of the area. Their concerns have been carefully considered and where appropriate have been addressed in this plan. Thanks to all for taking the time to provide comments.

- The consulting firm of OLSON + OLSON Planning and Design were retained to prepare this plan. In doing so, they put in many extra hours to consult with community members and seek ways to adapt the concept to meet their needs while ensuring the integrity of the plan. As subcontractors to Olson + Olson, the firm of Marshall + Associates also contributed to the plan.

Thanks to:

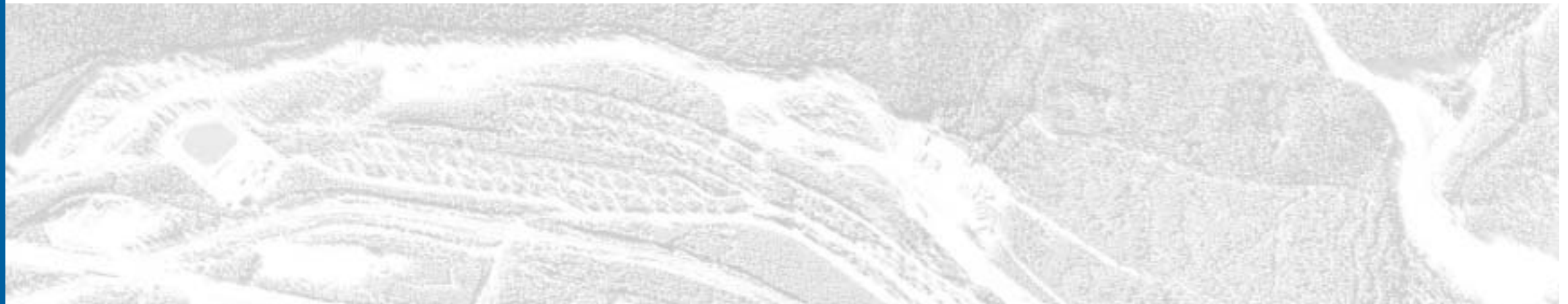
Doug Olson	Bobbie Olson
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Bill Marshall	Rado Ivanov

- Thanks also to Colleen McCluskey for editing the document and helping translate the concepts so that they are more easily understood and to Bob Sandford for his efforts in defining basic and essential services and developing the heritage tourism section. Both went well beyond what was expected.

- Behind the scenes there are many Parks Canada staff that have contributed to the preparation of this plan. A few of them have in particular played important roles. Whenever they've been asked they've gone the extra distance when it was really needed.

Thanks to:

Caroline Marion	Rob Layton
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## HIGHLIGHTS

In the spring of 1998, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced further steps to preserve the ecological integrity of Canada's national parks. In March 2000, the *Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada's National Parks* released its recommendations. The following section highlights aspects of the community plan that supports the Minister's direction and how the plan responds to the Panel's recommendations.

## NO NET NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT & LEADERSHIP IN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

*All national park community plans will adopt the principle of no net negative environmental impact.*

Lake Louise will take the following actions to ensure ecological integrity:

- establish a framework to monitor the impact of the community on the park
- reduce the Hamlet boundary by removing approximately 49 ha (37%) from the community
- rehabilitate disturbed lands to improve habitat for small mammals and birds and reinforce the Hamlet's link to its national park setting; introduce a program to protect and rehabilitate adjacent lands; in total more than forty hectares will be rehabilitated
- protect the Fairview and Whitehorn wildlife corridors
- prepare human use strategies for areas outside the community
- undertake stewardship initiatives such as sewage treatment upgrades and expanded recycling, energy, and water conservation programs

## APPROPRIATE USE GUIDELINES

*New business applications and development proposals will only be considered if it can be demonstrated that they are appropriate to the national park community and its setting in a national park. Community plans will outline basic and essential services and principles for assessing appropriateness.*

Business operators and Parks Canada will foster an appreciation of the park's environment and cultural heritage by:

- adopting a heritage tourism strategy
- installing more interpretive signs
- adding a major interpretation component to the Visitor Reception Centre that focuses on ecological integrity and cultural resources
- offering programs to make visitors and staff more aware of their role in protecting the park
- adopting a revised business license approval process for new business applicants
- defining basic and essential services that support heritage tourism

## RESPONSIBLE GROWTH MANAGEMENT

*The new National Parks Act requires that boundaries for all park communities be legislated and that commercial zones and maximum commercial floor space be established. All community plans will include an annual growth rate for commercial development.*

Parks Canada will respect existing growth commitments and is prepared to consider a limited amount of new low density growth if it results in improvements to the immediate natural environment, protects important cultural resources, or enhances the character of an operation and does not negatively impact the ecological health of the park. This growth, if carefully managed, can make an important contribution towards ensuring a healthy park and better visitor experiences.

The community plan's growth management strategy will:

- respect existing commitments for the development of the Chateau Lake Louise Meeting Facility, expansion of the Hostel and Train Station restaurant, etc. for a total of 15,606m<sup>2</sup>, 67 guest rooms and 154 overnight guests.
- allow an additional increase of existing commercial accommodation operations for a total of 3,660m<sup>2</sup>, 58 guest rooms and 148 overnight guests.
- prohibit new commercial accommodation operations
- phase commercial growth over a minimum of ten years
- allow commercial development to take place only after improvements at the waste water treatment plant have been made to reduce phosphorus content in the Bow River

- allow commercial accommodation to increase from 2,398 visitors/night to 2,700 visitors/night
- reduce the ceiling on overnight visitors to 2,700
- identify a residential ceiling of approximately 2,200 residents
- ensure infrastructure can support growth
- support improved recreational and social services for the community; replace the existing community centre with a larger multi-purpose facility
- limit retail expansion to existing commitments. These will support the delivery of basic and essential services

## BUILT HERITAGE

*Community plans must address the preservation of priority heritage buildings and ensure that new development is compatible in design and quality with existing neighbourhoods.*

The following actions will safeguard the area's cultural resources:

- require development proposals to include strategies for protecting important built heritage resources
- enforce architectural, landscape, transportation, parking, sign, and lighting guidelines

## NEED-TO-RESIDE

*Community plans must identify ways to eliminate the shortfall in residential housing in all park communities by 2005. This will involve enforcing the need-to-reside policy and building housing before, or at the same time as commercial development.*

The community plan addresses ways to provide residential housing for:

- 155 staff who are currently without accommodation
- 50 staff who live in poor and crowded conditions
- 130 staff required as a result of limited commercial and institutional growth

## HIGHLIGHTS



OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Community Plan are to:

- develop a clear vision of the future and provide a 'blueprint' for implementing the direction of the 1997 *Banff National Park Management Plan* in Lake Louise
- set limits to growth as well as parameters for development and services in order to ensure a service centre that is ecologically, socially and economically healthy for visitors and residents.
- provide a strategy that:
  - reflects Lake Louise's contribution to national park values
  - safeguards the ecological and cultural resources that make the park an internationally special place
  - meets the needs of Canadians, visitors, residents and businesses

CONTEXT

In 1979, the *Lake Louise Management Plan (Action Plan)* set out a low growth scenario that capped the number of guests in commercial accommodation. Development Guidelines based on this plan were prepared in 1981.

The *1988 Banff National Park Management Plan*, endorsed these documents and provided further direction for Lake Louise. In 1997, Parks Canada updated the *Banff National Park Management Plan* based on the results of the *Bow Valley Study*. The new plan provides clear direction concerning Lake Louise and is now the main source of guidance for managing the area.

SCOPE

This plan applies to all areas in the Hamlet of Lake Louise and major commercial operations in Upper Lake Louise with potential for development. This includes the Chateau Lake Louise, Deer Lodge, and Paradise Bungalows. The plan does not apply to Skiing Louise's facilities outside the Hamlet, but does govern the impact of the ski hill on the Hamlet's infrastructure and housing. This plan outlines major strategies for the community and will be further supported by "*Implementation Guidelines*". As a separate document, the *Implementation Guidelines* will provide additional background information, detailed design guidelines, and site parameters for implementing the direction provided in this *Community Plan*.

RELATED INITIATIVES

The following projects are separate initiatives from the *Community Plan* but will build upon its direction and the direction in the park management plan.

Day Use

Parks Canada will address ecological and crowding concerns by day-users in nearby areas through the preparation of human use strategies.

Skiing Louise

Ski Area Guidelines will address winter and summer activities. A new Long Range Plan will also be prepared.

Transportation

A Lake Louise public transportation study will look at ways to reduce congestion, improve the visitor experience, and seek environmental improvements.

Outlying Commercial Operations

New development and growth guidelines for Outlying Commercial Operations and hostels, including Moraine Lake Lodge, are being finalized.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In preparing this plan, Parks Canada has relied on input from a range of people who are interested in the future of Lake Louise. The Lake Louise Advisory Board (LLAB), in particular, has provided valuable insight and helped shape this plan.

Open houses in Calgary and Lake Louise attracted more than 200 people, many of whom took the time to provide written comments. Parks Canada also spoke to major businesses and stakeholders.

Canadian Pacific Hotels consulted with the public about their proposed meeting facility and received more than 350 written comments. As many of those comments were relevant for Lake Louise as a whole, Parks Canada considered them during the preparation of this plan.

Consultations showed general support for the proposed principles, the definitions of basic and essential services, the need to address housing issues, and many of the concepts. However, opinions about more commercial growth varied.

Three scenarios for commercial accommodation growth were presented for public comment. Scenario 1 would allow 300 additional overnight visitors, resulting in a total capacity of 2,700/night. Scenario 2 would allow 570 additional overnight visitors, for a capacity of 2,970. Scenario 3 would add 270 overnight visitors for a total of 2,670.

Reaction to these scenarios was mixed. Some wanted a no-growth option. However others appear willing to support some growth if there are tangible ecological gains. The LLAB and business operators favour Scenario 2 and oppose limitations on the pace of growth.

Parks Canada has carefully considered these varying views in preparing this plan.



## LOCATION & SETTING

The Bow Valley in Banff National Park is an area of stunning scenery and critical environmental importance. For the most part, development in the valley is concentrated in the Hamlet of Lake Louise and the Town of Banff, 56 km to the south. The community of Field is located 26 km to the west. The Hamlet is bisected by the CPR.

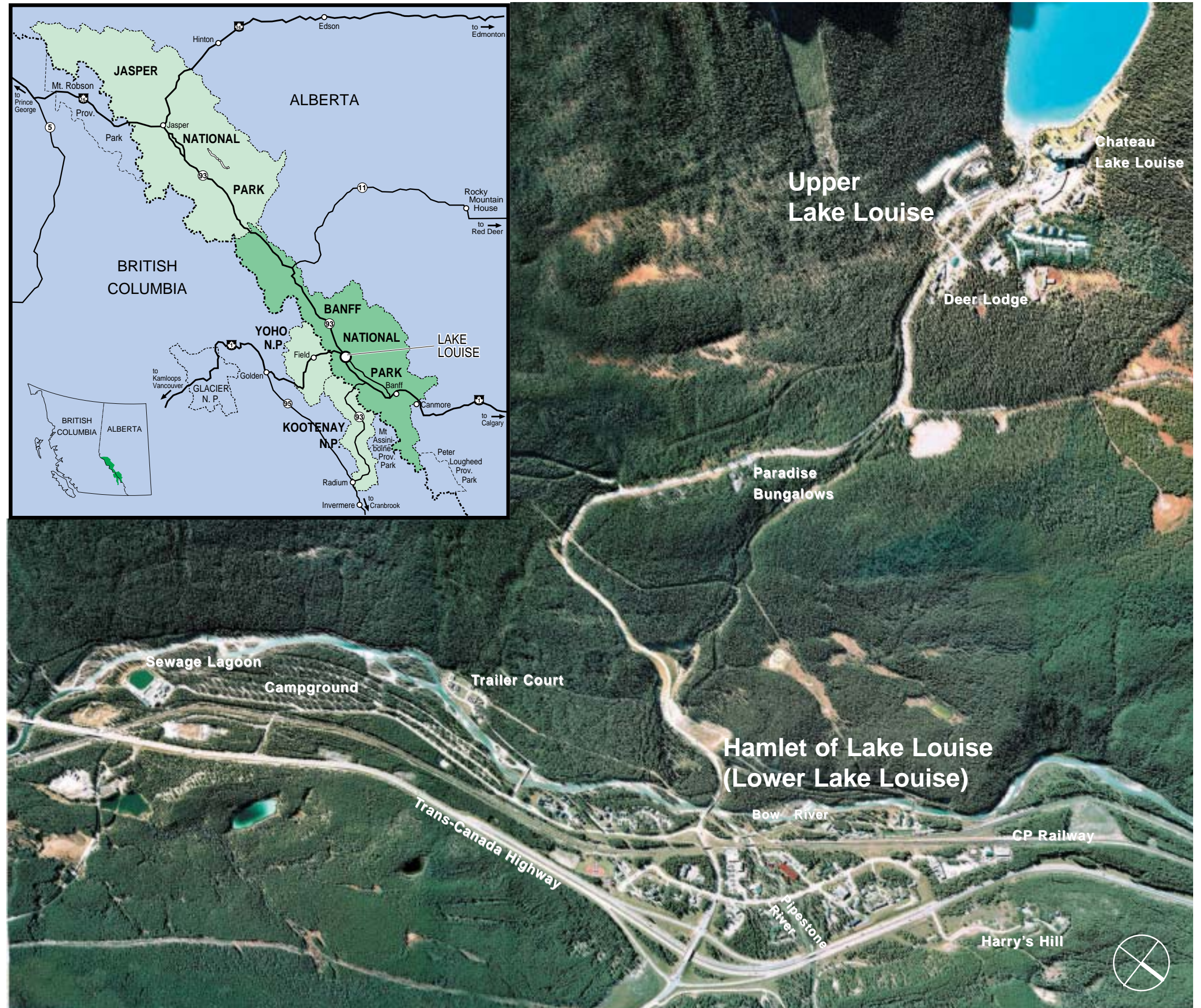
Lake Louise has two distinct areas - Upper Lake Louise and the Hamlet of Lake Louise.

### Upper Lake Louise

Set against the impressive backdrop of the Victoria Glacier, this is an area of towering peaks, spruce and fir forests, alpine meadows and, of course, the lake itself. Located at the base of the Plain of Six Glaciers, Lake Louise is one of the most photographed sites in the country, if not the world. The world famous Chateau Lake Louise dominates the lake's eastern shore. Other development in the immediate area includes Deer Lodge and Paradise Bungalows.

### The Hamlet of Lake Louise (Lower Lake Louise)

Along the banks of the scenic Bow and Pipestone Rivers, the Hamlet of Lake Louise is the gateway for visitors to the region. The community is bounded on the east by the Trans-Canada, on the west by the Bow River, and divided in two by the railway. About 60% of this 131 ha area is developed or heavily disturbed. Visitor services include accommodation, restaurants, service stations, and supplies.



## A PLACE FOR NATURE

### . . . Protecting Banff's Ecological Resources

"The National Parks of Canada are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment and shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

*National Parks Act*

### POLICY DIRECTION

The park's management plan identifies ecological integrity as the cornerstone of its mandate and outlines the contribution Lake Louise must make to environmental protection. Measures include:

- limiting the number of overnight guests
- allowing operators to expand to their assigned limits
- prohibiting the development of new land outside the Hamlet for commercial purposes
- reviewing the impact of the Harry's Hill residential area and prohibiting expansion of the boundary around Harry's Hill
- removing the Trailer Court by 2005

The management plan allows some growth in Lake Louise. This growth will be limited and subject to conditions that benefit the park.

In the spring of 1998, the Federal Government announced there would be no new commercial accommodation operations.

### BACKGROUND

Lake Louise is one of the most popular destinations in Banff National Park. Upper and Lower Lake Louise will continue to be managed as a high visitor use area where visitation will be encouraged. Within this context, careful attention is required to ensure that the millions of visitors who enjoy the area every year do not overly stress the ecological integrity of the surrounding park land.



The main areas of ecological concern associated with Lake Louise are:

- wildlife habitat effectiveness
- the protection of the Fairview and Whitehorn wildlife corridors
- loss of native vegetation and natural habitat
- the spread of non-native plant species
- the habituation of wildlife to humans
- conflict between people and wildlife
- the quality of the riparian environment
- water quality and conservation
- cumulative effects

Concern about Harry's Hill led to a review of the impact of this residential area. The review concluded that minor infilling would not pose problems for wildlife using a corridor between Harry's Hill and the ski area parking lots.

### OBJECTIVES

To ensure the community contributes to a healthy regional ecosystem.

To manage visitor use so that ecological integrity is not threatened.

To limit growth as stated in the management plan and by the Minister.

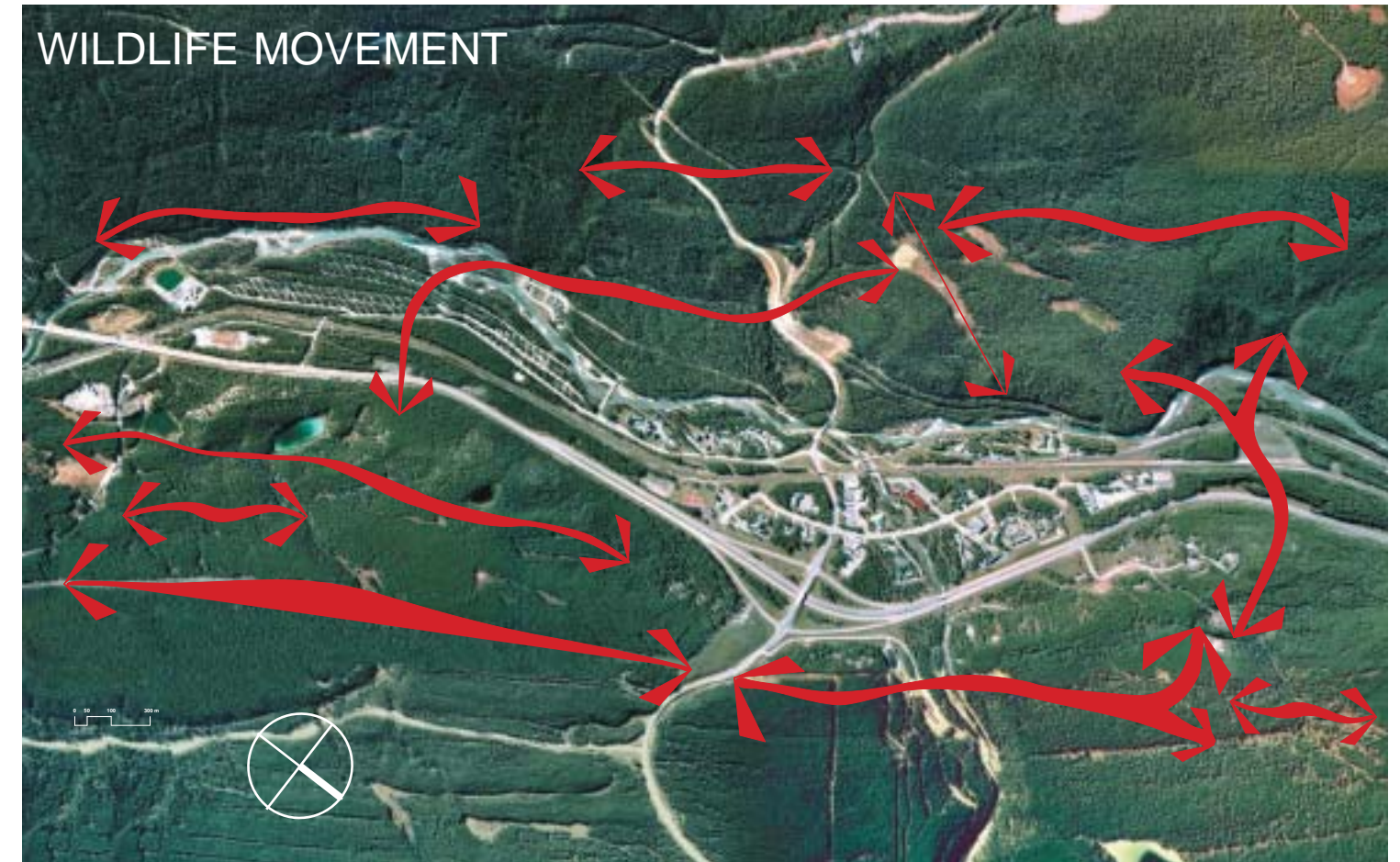
To maintain healthy wildlife habitat in the surrounding region.

To discourage large mammals from entering the community.

To protect the Fairview and Whitehorn wildlife corridors.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE

New development and visitor use in the community will have no net negative environmental impact on the park's ecological integrity.





## KEY ACTIONS

While the following actions address specific environmental concerns, readers should remember that the need to protect ecological integrity is the foundation for all the actions in this *Community Plan*.

### General

- implement a no net negative environmental impact monitoring framework
- apply the precautionary principle when there is uncertainty about the impact of an action
- reduce the community boundary by 37% . This will reduce the size of the community by 49 ha and help protect wildlife movement routes and riparian environments
- zone sensitive sites as environmental reserves
- use educational and interpretive programs to promote a better understanding of sustainable communities, ecological integrity, local environmental issues, and the vital role of staff and visitors in protecting our national parks
- limit commercial leaseholds to their existing size; allow boundary adjustments where they will contribute to better resource protection
- consider the impact of projects in the Hamlet on areas outside the community
- concentrate development on disturbed sites
- keep the amount of development on individual sites to a minimum; reduce the development footprint where possible and practical
- enforce the terms and conditions of the Trailer Court license of occupation as new housing becomes available; rehabilitate the area when the trailers are removed
- rigorously apply the CEAA to development proposals

### Aquatics (see also Stewardship)

- exclude most riparian environments from the Hamlet
- establish environmental reserves along all river banks within the Hamlet
- locate new development a minimum of 30 m from all rivers
- rehabilitate disturbed areas along Louise Creek and the Pipestone River

## Vegetation

- restrict the use of non-native species; where practical, remove species that pose serious threats to the ecosystem
- rehabilitate more than 40 ha with native vegetation inside and outside the village
- actively pursue improvements to the natural landscape on commercial and residential properties
- reduce the need for chemicals through an integrated pest management program
- work with the CPR to control exotic plants carried in on rail cars
- establish a budget to eliminate noxious weeds (e.g., thistle)
- monitor noxious weeds and non-native vegetation
- reduce the potential risks of wildfires and potential impacts on facilities by selectively managing vegetation

## Wildlife

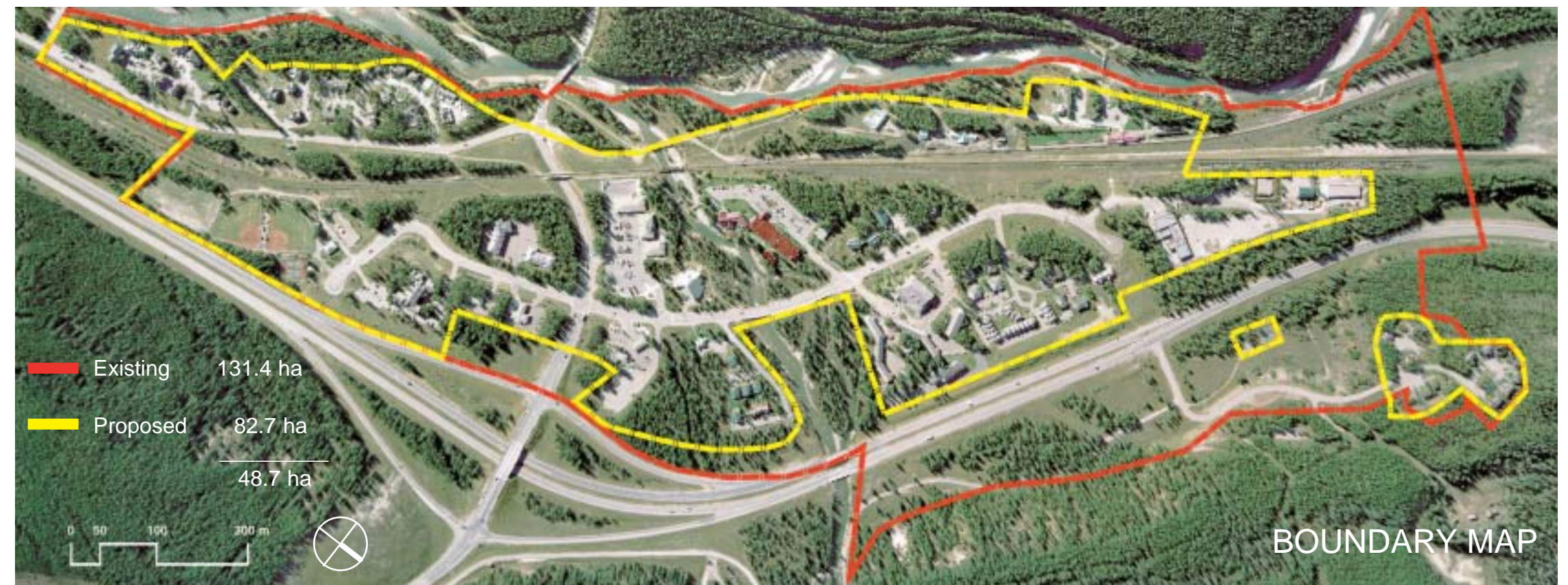
- manage the community to assist in maintaining healthy habitat for large carnivores and ungulates in the region
- plant species large animals do not find palatable; this will help discourage large mammals from entering the Hamlet and Upper Lake Louise

- improve habitat for small mammals, birds, and insects
- work with the CPR to eliminate and clean up grain spills
- rehabilitate areas no longer required for community activities (e.g. community horse corrals)
- ensure upgrades to the Trans-Canada Highway consider the community, human use issues, and wildlife movement
- monitor wildlife movement in the Fairview and Whitehorn corridors
- locate facilities and activities so they do not block wildlife movement
- adopt standards for outdoor lighting that contribute to habitat security and wildlife movement
- assess the effect of the campground on wildlife movement; adjust as necessary
- continue with measures to prevent wildlife habituation, particularly in the campground (e.g., information on food handling, staff training, campground patrols, etc.)
- improve waste management; upgrade garbage bins; ensure timely collection of garbage
- implement the bear/humans conflict plan

## Human Use

The following actions will address crowding and other human use issues outside the community:

- actively manage summer use of the ski hill
- prepare human use strategies that support high quality visitor experiences and contribute to the park's environmental health
- support public transportation to Moraine Lake and Upper Lake Louise as a way to improve habitat effectiveness, wildlife movement and the experience of visitors if it can be practically implemented
- limit day-use infrastructure (e.g., parking) in Upper Lake Louise
- assess the impact of trails and activities (e.g., mountain biking, groomed ski trails) around the Hamlet and the need for modifications on the ski hill side of the Trans-Canada
- review licenses of occupation/leases in the immediate area that have not been addressed by this plan to ensure consistency with its basic intent and principles
- monitor the impact of shoulder season use on wildlife; take necessary measures to reduce any negative impact
- reassess the habitat effectiveness target for the Lake Louise Landscape Management Unit
- require commercial operators to occasionally survey their guests and staff to determine the type and patterns of outdoor activities. This will help in the preparation of human use strategies
- monitor use levels on trails and roadways in the area



# A PLACE OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

... Protecting Historical and Cultural Resources

## POLICY DIRECTION

The Management Plan calls for the protection of the park's heritage resources and a systematic approach to managing built heritage.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage has reiterated the need for development to respect the area's culture and history.

## BACKGROUND

Lake Louise has a number of heritage resources that are in need of protection. The Chateau Lake Louise, the Train Station, the view of Lake Louise and the Plain of Six Glaciers - these are just a few reminders of Lake Louise's history. As the community adapts to changing circumstances, it must take care to preserve these links to the past; to preserve its unique heritage character; and to look to its heritage resources for inspiration as new development proceeds.

## OBJECTIVES

To protect important cultural resources.

To increase awareness of the area's heritage value and the role Lake Louise has played in the evolution of Banff National Park.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. All development must respect Lake Louise's heritage and the architecture of its historic buildings.
2. Parks Canada, residents, and visitors share responsibility for safeguarding Lake Louise's heritage.

## KEY ACTIONS

- use the *Built Heritage Resource Description and Analysis (BHRDA)* when making decisions about heritage buildings; protect structures and landscapes identified in the BHRDA
- provide owners with information about the significance of their heritage resources
- include information about historic resources in promotional material
- encourage owners to maintain and enhance resources that have special historical significance or character; ensure development proposals include measures to protect important heritage features
- use interpretive programs to highlight Lake Louise's association with the railway
- adjust leases to require protection of important heritage features as a condition for redevelopment and/or as other opportunities present themselves
- ensure development next to heritage structures respects the character and setting



Chateau Lake Louise, early 1900s



Chateau swimming pool, ca. 1930



Tramway, ca. 1920



Post Hotel, ca. 1940



Triangle Inn, date unknown



Chateau Lake Louise, ca. 1909



Tour Buses, mid-1900s



Rocky Mountain Tours Garage



Schloss Residence



Train Station



Paradise Bungalows



Deer Lodge



Swiss Guides Cottage



View of Lake Louise and Plain of the Six Glaciers



# CULTURAL RESOURCES

## Important Cultural Features

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Railway Station                              | 8. Trail System                         |
| 2. Post Hotel                                   | 9. View of Lake Louise and Mt. Victoria |
| 3. Paradise Bungalows                           | 10. Hillside Cottage                    |
| 4. Picnic Area                                  | 11. Swiss Guide's Cottage               |
| 5. Tramway Roadbed                              | 12. Schloss Residence                   |
| 6. Roadbed of the Original Trans Canada Highway | 13. Deer Lodge                          |
| 7. Chateau Lake Louise (Painter Wing)           | 14. Rocky Mountain Tours Garage         |

# COMMUNITY CHARACTER

## POLICY DIRECTION

The following direction is taken from the management plan:

- ensure Lake Louise is a model national park service centre that reflects the surrounding natural environment and national park values
- maintain the integrity of the regional landscape
- services and facilities will reflect an appropriate national park experience
- reassess land use within the Hamlet
- consider the possibility of using undeveloped lands for parking
- allow for public transportation to Upper Lake Louise

## BACKGROUND

In any community, a variety of factors come together to create the “spirit of the place”. Foremost among these factors are the people, the landscape, and the local architecture. For the most part, its superb natural setting and its location in a national park have shaped the “spirit” of Lake Louise.

To protect this spirit, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has stressed the need for strict development guidelines, including height restrictions and architectural standards. Heritage Tourism and Appropriate Use strategies (see A Place for People) are also key to enhancing the character of Lake Louise.

In many cases, land use and architecture in Lake Louise have a strong link with the natural setting. However, some recent development is not in keeping with the community’s character. Improvements are needed in areas such as parking, pedestrian access, architectural design, land use, layout, landscape, signs, and lighting to ensure they complement the glacier fed rivers, majestic peaks, and aquamarine lakes that are the dramatic backdrop to this mountain community.

## OBJECTIVES

To protect and enhance the appearance of Lake Louise (architecture, landscape, etc.).

To contribute to ecological integrity and reinforce the relationship of the community to its national park setting.

To restore disturbed sites to a more natural state.

To help visitors find services and facilities.

To eliminate light pollution.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Lake Louise will continue to be a small, rustic, park community where visitors feel welcome.
2. Lake Louise’s built environment will reflect its natural setting and the scale of existing development.

## KEY ACTIONS

### Hamlet Land Use

- adjust zoning to address the following issues: residential housing, environmentally sensitive areas, recreational and social needs, and parking
- create a village centre and protect adjacent lands by centralizing commercial activity in the Hamlet
- prohibit new malls and limit new retail operations (See A Place for People)
- refuse requests to zone new land for commercial use
- promote infilling and consolidation of development, while respecting the importance of green space and buffers

### Architecture

- require all new construction and renovations to enhance the character and scale (e.g., placement, height, detail) of existing development
- restrict building height to three storeys -- two full floors and the use of the attic as the third floor

- restrict the Chateau and the Charleston housing complex to the height of its existing buildings
- enforce architectural guidelines (e.g., on materials, form, colours, placement, density, scale etc.)

## Views

- protect and enhance important views of natural and cultural features
- protect the ability of people to enjoy the night sky by adopting ‘dark sky’ lighting standards

## Sense of Entry

- enhance a visitor’s sense of arrival in a special place through improvements to the entrance to Lake Louise

## Transportation/Parking

- prohibit any expansion of the public parking lot at Upper Lake Louise
- keep the area used for surface parking to a minimum by requiring the construction of parking structures where important to minimize the footprint of development (underground or underneath the structure where possible)
- restrict new surface parking lots to disturbed areas

A separate study will assess public transportation to Upper Lake Louise.

## Pedestrians

- provide a continuous system of well-marked trails and sidewalks that link the community’s facilities and services

## Landscape Strategy

Careful attention to the landscape, including vegetation, lighting, outdoor furnishings, and signs, can have a profound effect on the character of the Hamlet and Upper Lake Louise. Current landscape practices vary in both appropriateness and effectiveness. Turf grass and other non-native plants can attract wildlife and require the use of herbicides and pesticides. Site furnishings and lighting vary in style and materials. A shortage of signs directing pedestrians and vehicles leads to confusion.

### Planting

- as part of any application for development, require detailed landscape plans that address all areas associated with the operation
- plant native species that wildlife do not find palatable
- use vegetation, not structures, to screen undesirable views and to soften the appearance of buildings where possible
- plant native species in natural groupings
- rehabilitate disturbed areas
- establish a budget for landscape improvements

### Lighting

- provide lighting that is pedestrian in scale, directed downward, moderate in illumination, and naturally colour balanced.

### Signs

- limit signs to the following types: information/directional; traffic; interpretation; street identification; site, building and business identification; and a sign at the entrance to the Hamlet
- prohibit sidewalk billboards, backlit or internally lit signs, and advertising signs
- ensure signs are consistent in form and style; made of natural materials; strategically located; pedestrian in scale; and used sparingly
- place priority on improving orientation and directing visitors to hotels, the campground, the visitor centre, the train station, emergency services, gas stations, Moraine Lake, and Lake Louise

### Winter Use

- consider the need for snow removal in the design of landscaped areas, parking lots, and trails



## Landscape Projects

Approximately 37 hectares (92 acres) of land will be rehabilitated within and around Lower Lake Louise. These projects exclude improvements on individual leases. An additional 3 hectares (7.4 acres) of disturbed land will be rehabilitated in Upper Lake Louise (not shown on this map).

1. Slope revegetation and restoration.
2. Fairview roadside revegetation to restore disturbed areas, screen developments, and direct pedestrian circulation.

- 3\*. Encourage restoration of the historic railway garden.
4. Riparian zone restoration. Remove the parking lots to within 30 meters of the Bow River and restore riparian vegetation.
5. Restore vegetation and screen future parking area.
6. Provide enhancement planting along road to reduce visual impact of new development and provide selective views.
7. Revegetate roadside verges along Village Road. Provide adequate setback for future pathways and snow storage.
- 8\*. Develop for picnic use.

- 9\*. Develop a pedestrian plaza at Samson Mall. Planting will soften the hardscape, offer shade, and lend visual interest.
- 10\*. Develop mini plazas and seating areas behind the mall.
11. Restore road verges along the Trans Canada Highway.
12. Restore riparian vegetation along the Pipestone River.
13. Berm and revegetate verge along the Trans Canada Highway to provide a visual screen and noise reduction.
- 14\*. Playing field construction.
15. Enhancement planting along road to Harry's Hill.

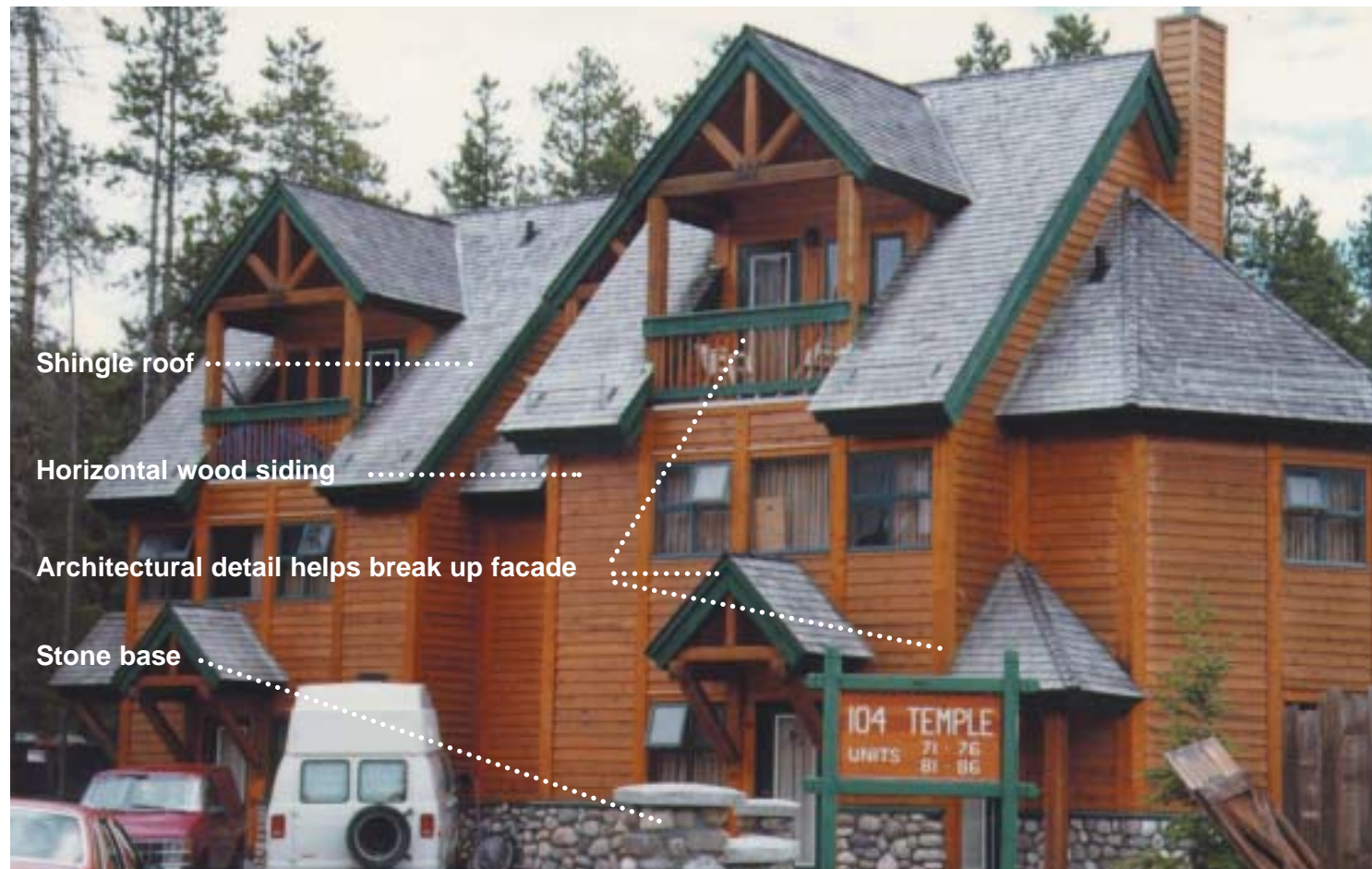
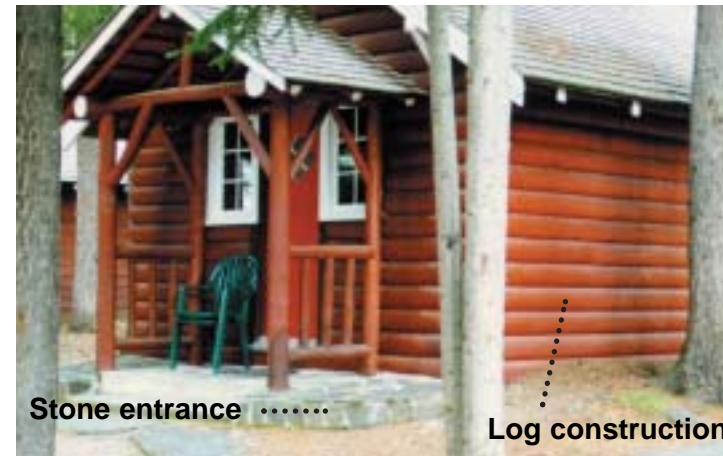
16. Revegetate along the railway to provide screening.
17. Rehabilitate areas outside the community that are no longer needed for community purposes (i.e. old community corral, east of sewage plant, pipestone area, etc.).
18. Restore disturbed lands adjacent to railway.
19. Rehabilitate trailer court area once structures are removed.

\* Landscape projects not included in the total area of rehabilitated land (i.e. soccer field, railway garden, plazas).



# Architecture

The following photographs highlight appropriate architectural style, articulation, colours, and use of materials.



## A PLACE FOR PEOPLE

. . . *Services for Visitors*

### POLICY DIRECTION

With respect to Banff and Lake Louise, the *Bow Valley Study* recognized that these visitor centres “ . . . will help Banff National Park fulfill its tourism role as described in the *Tourism Destination Model* and will contribute to the ecological integrity of the park by serving as centres for infrastructure and activities.”

The management plan states that Lake Louise will:

- serve primarily as a day use destination and visitor service centre
- offer basic and essential services and facilities that support heritage tourism that meet the immediate needs of visitors
- share services with Field and Banff
- limit the capacity of commercial accommodation
- assign specific limits to operators and allow them to expand to their assigned limits
- proceed with consideration of the proposal for a meeting facility at the Chateau Lake Louise

In May, 1998 the Federal Government refined this direction by:

- prohibiting new commercial accommodation operations
- restricting commercial development by floor area ratios, assigned visitor capacities and occupancy rates
- ensuring development and use provides the opportunity to enjoy high quality travel experiences based on national park values
- placing conditions on the proposed Chateau Lake Louise Meeting Facility

## BACKGROUND

Since its early days, Banff National Park has been a place for people. Lake Louise, often referred to as the heart of the park, is an international symbol of Canada and its national park system. The area’s dramatic mountain scenery and world class visitor facilities have inspired millions of Canadians and international guests.

Providing quality services is a fundamental part of the national park mandate. Through improvements to individual operations, the park will protect its ecological integrity while offering visitors a variety of activities that enhance their national park experience and improve their understanding of natural ecosystems and cultural heritage.

The main visitor service issue in Lake Louise is the amount of new overnight commercial accommodation that should be permitted. The *Banff National Park Management Plan* recognized the need for limited growth and fixed limits. Some commercial growth commitments have been made subject to meeting specific conditions, successful application of the CEEA, meeting the requirements of the *Community Plan* and supporting *Implementation Guidelines* and the Development Review Process. Projects that have this degree of commitment are:

- Chateau Lake Louise Meeting Facility
- a total of 200 beds (guests) for the Hostel (lease)
- expansion of the railway station restaurant (Order in Council)
- provision of restaurant services for the Mountaineer Lodge (lease)

In addition to these, some growth offers the potential for site-specific ecological improvements, better protection for important cultural features, improvements to the character of individual operations, and significant heritage tourism programs which would not likely happen otherwise.

## OBJECTIVES

To provide quality visitor services and products that are consistent with the area’s role as a national park visitor service centre.

To make all visitors aware they are in a national park and foster an appreciation and understanding of the ecology of the park and its cultural heritage.

To place limits to growth on each existing commercial accommodation operator.

To allow commercial accommodation operators to expand to assigned limits if specific site conditions are met, CEEA is rigorously applied, and the benefits to visitors and Parks Canada are clear.

To maintain the existing variety of visitor accommodation.

To limit additional retail activity to existing commitments.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Tourism in Lake Louise will be based on an appreciation of the nature, history and culture of Banff National Park and the Banff Bow Valley area and must not threaten the beauty and ecological integrity of the park.





## KEY ACTIONS

### Heritage Tourism & Interpretation

- adopt the Travel Industry Association of Canada's code of ethics
- include information about Lake Louise's natural and cultural heritage in promotional material and publications
- promote awareness of heritage tourism among staff, media, travel writers, etc.
- offer opportunities to enjoy and learn about Banff National Park at the majority of businesses
- ask operators of commercial accommodation to develop heritage tourism strategies
- encourage the use of heritage themes in interior design and products
- include presentations about the area's natural and cultural heritage in all conferences; attract conferences that deal specifically with heritage themes or products
- convene an annual 'round table' of head lessees to review and refine heritage tourism initiatives
- offer staff training and visitor programs to increase awareness of the role of visitors and residents in heritage preservation and of the ecological issues of the area
- use the Visitor Reception Centre to showcase environmental stewardship initiatives and ecological integrity issues through high quality interpretive activities
- promote the Visitor Reception Centre as the primary location for visitor information
- develop links between the Visitor Reception Centre and the community that support heritage tourism
- increase the number of interpretive signs in the Hamlet
- encourage and celebrate environmental stewardship

### Appropriate Development and Basic and Essential Services

- use the principles and examples of basic and essential services when evaluating applications for new businesses or changes in use
- develop an appropriate business license test to assess new applications
- ensure all businesses within a development are consistent with the appropriate use principles
- permit existing businesses that are inconsistent with these principles to continue. Expansions requiring a review under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* or that involve a change in commercial use must abide by these principles.

### Appropriate Use Principles

Services and/or products will:

- support heritage tourism and help visitors enjoy their national park experience
- have no net negative environmental impact on adjacent lands
- have a significant, legitimate market in the park and not be intended for sale elsewhere
- be a permissible park activity
- meet the immediate needs of visitors. Approved secondary aspects of an operation (e.g, meeting space) must foster an appreciation of the park.
- occupy as little land as possible
- complement services provided in the town of Banff and in Field
- commit to environmental stewardship

### A Guide to Appropriate Services

The following examples are intended as a guide to appropriate services for visitors:

- emergency services (police, fire, ambulance, rescue)
- interpretation, heritage education, and information
- accommodation -- from a campground and hostel to hotels
- retail outlets that sell basic items (e.g., groceries, toiletries, newspapers, etc.)
- retail outlets offering heritage products: 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
- a variety of food services - from bakeries to restaurants
- meeting facilities that:
  - are a secondary use of facilities whose main purpose is to provide accommodation
  - are appropriate in size to the hotel
  - play a major role in heritage tourism
- basic financial services
- liquor store
- pharmacy
- medical services (clinic)
- transportation (bus, taxi, rental cars)
- opportunities for adventure learning
- public laundromat, showers
- postal services

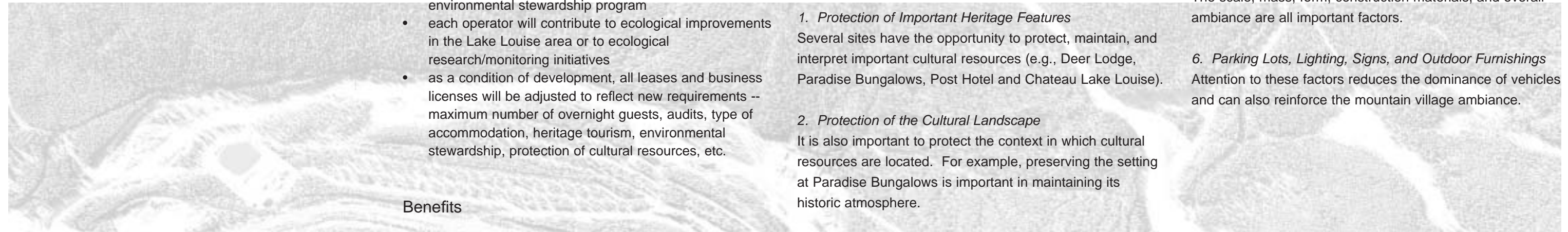


## Commercial Accommodation

Seven operators in Lake Louise currently provide a total of 1,081 rooms for approximately 2,400 overnight visitors. Each of these operators wants to expand. The average annual occupancy rate is estimated at 77%. During the summer, commercial accommodation is generally full.

In May 1998, the Federal Government announced the conditions for the proposed Chateau Lake Louise Meeting Facility. This development, in conjunction with room changes in the rest of the hotel, will result in a net increase of 52 guest rooms (104 overnight visitors) and add an area of 13,800m<sup>2</sup>. The facility will include hotel rooms, meeting space and a restaurant.

The Hostel's lease allows for an increase of 50 overnight guests. This will add an area of 1,200m<sup>2</sup>.



## Guiding Principle

Growth in commercial accommodation will only be permitted if there are:

- existing commitments, or
- ecological improvements on or off site, or
- cultural resources requiring protection, or
- improvements to the character of the operation and the site (see page 10)
- no negative measurable impacts on the ecological health of the park

The following conditions will also apply to growth in commercial accommodation operations:

- each existing commercial accommodation operator will be assigned a maximum number of guest rooms, room occupancy rate (guests/room/night), and an overnight capacity
- audits will be carried out annually. If growth approaches the limits outlined in this plan, monthly audits may be necessary.
- an appropriate heritage tourism program will be presented to all hotel guests and staff
- all commercial accommodation will adopt an environmental stewardship program
- each operator will contribute to ecological improvements in the Lake Louise area or to ecological research/monitoring initiatives
- as a condition of development, all leases and business licenses will be adjusted to reflect new requirements -- maximum number of overnight guests, audits, type of accommodation, heritage tourism, environmental stewardship, protection of cultural resources, etc.

## Benefits

Allowing limited expansion or renovations of commercial accommodation will allow Parks Canada to achieve benefits in three main areas as described below. These benefits will be expected to occur at each site where they are applicable.

### Ecological Benefits

#### 1. Reducing On-Site Development

The removal of parking lots, roadways, and buildings will reduce the amount of a site that is covered by development -- e.g., the potential removal of the large parking area at the Post Hotel.

#### 2. Returning Disturbed Sites to a Natural State

The benefit of this action is related to the size and location of rehabilitated areas. The Chateau, the Post Hotel and Deer Lodge have large areas that could be rehabilitated. Also, rehabilitating areas that are adjacent to wildlands could have important benefits for a wide range of wildlife. The rehabilitation of roadsides, landscape around buildings, and the berm along the Trans Canada is of lesser significance.

#### 3. Reducing the Size of the Leasehold

Reducing the size of the leasehold helps protect adjacent park lands and limits the impact of development.

#### 4. Impact on Adjacent Lands

Sites that reduce the impact of development contribute to the protection of the park's ecological integrity -- e.g., water sources, wildlife corridors, habitat, etc. Sites outside the Hamlet have the most potential to keep their impact to a minimum through careful management and the size of their development footprint.

### Cultural Resource Benefits

#### 1. Protection of Important Heritage Features

Several sites have the opportunity to protect, maintain, and interpret important cultural resources (e.g., Deer Lodge, Paradise Bungalows, Post Hotel and Chateau Lake Louise).

#### 2. Protection of the Cultural Landscape

It is also important to protect the context in which cultural resources are located. For example, preserving the setting at Paradise Bungalows is important in maintaining its historic atmosphere.

### Character Benefits

#### 1. Quality of the Architectural Expression

Improvements in the density, massing, form, colours, and materials used in a development contributes to the character of the site and the community. The condition of existing buildings and the potential for improvements at a number of operations offer a significant opportunity to enhance the overall character of the sites.

#### 2. Impact on Views to and from the Development

The height, mass, and scale of development, as well as the potential to use vegetation as a screen, all affect the visibility of a site.

#### 3. Use of Native Plant Species

Using native plant species helps to emphasize Lake Louise's setting in a national park. The Chateau Lake Louise has the opportunity to replant significant areas of manicured horticultural landscapes with appropriate native species. Sites such as Deer Lodge, the Lake Louise Inn, and the Hostel have only a moderate amount of manicured landscape.

#### 4. Softening the Impact of the Built Environment

Depending on the height and location of buildings, vegetation can be used to soften the built environment. Other considerations include the amount of landscaped area around the building, the possibility of dense plantings, and the visibility of the development.

#### 5. The Mountain Village Ambiance

An operation's architectural style can make a significant contribution to Lake Louise's mountain village ambiance. The scale, mass, form, construction materials, and overall ambiance are all important factors.

#### 6. Parking Lots, Lighting, Signs, and Outdoor Furnishings

Attention to these factors reduces the dominance of vehicles and can also reinforce the mountain village ambiance.

## Commercial Accommodation Growth

A limited amount of growth will be permitted for each existing commercial accommodation operation to meet existing commitments and to realize potential benefits. As previously announced, no new commercial accommodation operations will be permitted.

Existing operators will be allowed to expand to assigned maximum limits if they clearly demonstrate they have met the conditions, principles, and benefits as well as rigorously applied the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and development review process.

## Commercial Accommodation Ceiling

The existing ceiling of overnight visitors staying in commercial accommodation is reduced to 2,700.

## Commercial Retail/Restaurant/ Meeting Space

- allow hotel expansion of basic gift shops, restaurant services and meeting space for their overnight guests. These facilities must be appropriate for the size of their operation, reflect density guidelines and appropriate use principles
- the Mountaineer will be allowed to re-establish a restaurant as per its lease (130m<sup>2</sup>)
- beyond existing commitments, hotel requirements, and Samson Mall, no new retail nor restaurant space will be permitted
- prohibit gas station expansion

### Samson Mall

- prohibit an increase of commercial space (including underground)
- permit use of existing unoccupied mall space as long as additional parking requirements are addressed
- allow underground parking
- improve the area's ambiance and highlight its importance as a focal point for the community (e.g., improvement to the landscape and exterior space)

### Train Station Area

An Order in Council guides redevelopment of the heritage railway station. The railway gardens are also an important cultural feature.

- prohibit on-site commercial accommodation in the area
- allow the expansion (476m<sup>2</sup>) of the railway station as identified in the Order in Council (ie., dining area, conservatory, CPR rolling stock)
- ensure additions preserve the station's heritage values
- protect the riparian environment by encouraging the reclamation of part of the parking lots beside the river; identify alternative parking
- encourage restoration of the historic railway gardens
- encourage expanded interpretation programs

### Chateau

- limit the retail services to the 1997 level
- allow improvements to health facilities. These improvements must take place within the sq. m. limits for the hotel. Expansion of building size underground will be permitted, within the established limits, if there is a removal of an equivalent area of development.

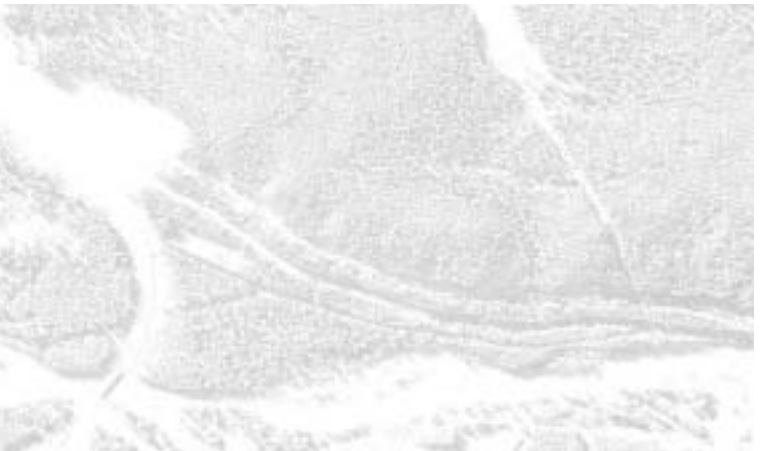
## Campground

The campground has 409 sites with a capacity of 1,227 overnight visitors. An overflow campground accommodates an average of 50 vehicles/night during a 10-week period in the summer.

- maintain the camping opportunity while supporting public transportation and initiatives to reduce human/wildlife conflicts
- restrict the campground to its current capacity
- continue programs to prevent habituation of bears
- ensure campers have current bear information and practice appropriate food and waste management
- reassess the need for the overflow campground, its capacity, and the potential for a new location

Table 1 - Commercial Development Growth Limits

Facility	Current* & Existing Commitments			Change			Future Total*			
	# Rms	#Guests/ Night	sq. m.	# Rms	#Guests/ Night	sq. m.	# Rms	#Guests/ Night	Occupancy Rate ++	Total sq.m.
Chateau	563	1,126	55,700	0	0	0	563	1,126	2	55,700
Hostel	59	200	3,261	0	0	0	59	200	3.4	3,261
Mountaineer Lodge	78	195	4,198	10	25	640	88	220	2.5	4,838
Post Hotel	98	225	6,622	6	24	450	104	249	2.3	7,072
Lake Louise Inn	232	534	11,296	15	35	960	247	569	2.3	12,256
Paradise Bungalows	45	126	2,353	12	34	650	57	160	2.8	3,003
Deer Lodge	73	146	4,973	15	30	960	88	176	2.0	5,933
Train Station	n/a	n/a	917	n/a	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	917
Samson Mall	n/a	n/a	3,018	n/a	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	3,018
Gas Stations	n/a	n/a	850	n/a	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	850
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,148</b>	<b>2,552</b>	<b>93,188*</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>3,660</b>	<b>1,206</b>	<b>2,700</b>		<b>96,848*</b>



++ guest/room/night

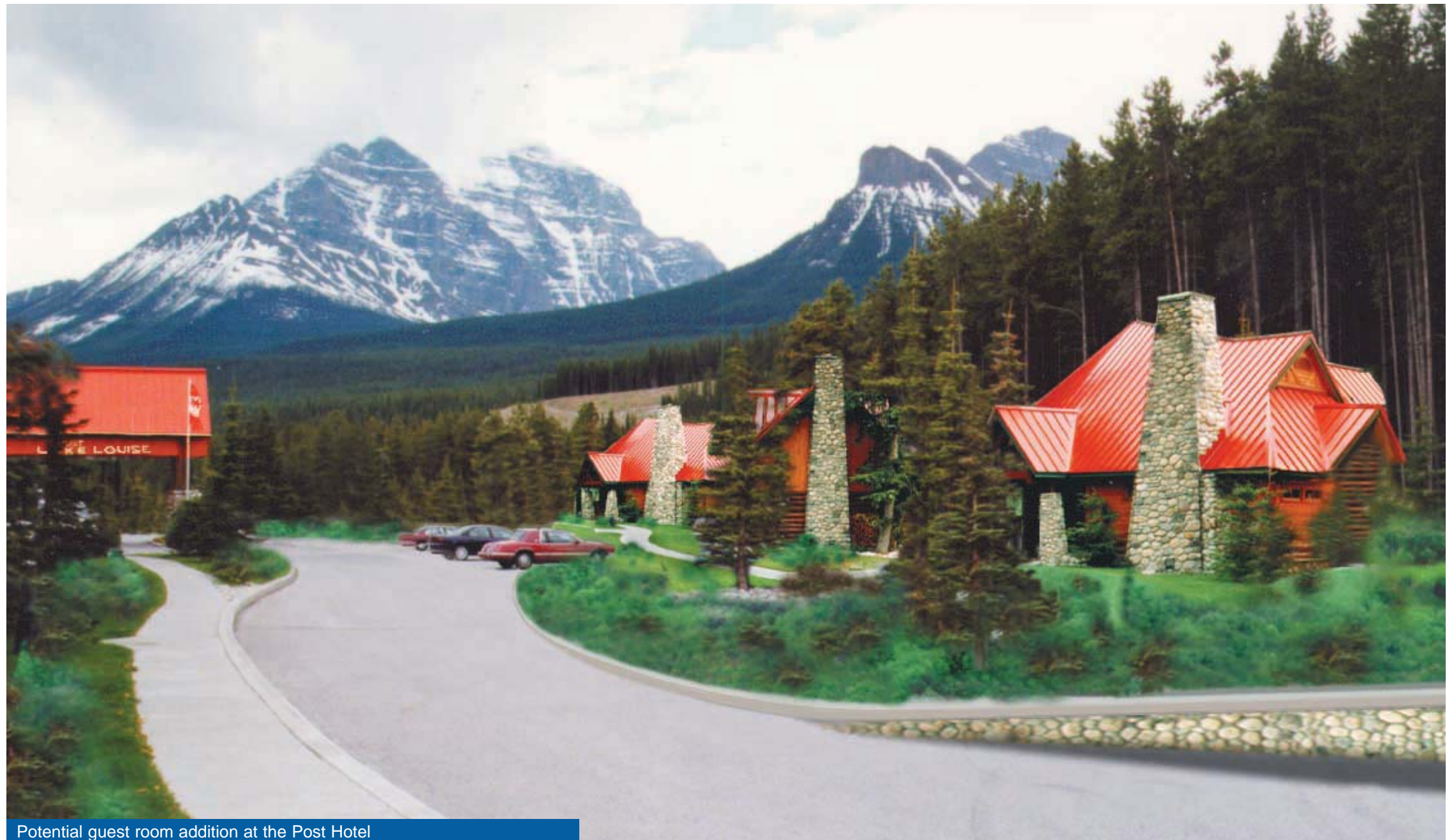
\* current development is estimated, Future Totals may vary based on confirmation of current development

## Achieving the Vision

The following renderings illustrate examples of appropriate architecture, scale, materials, color, landscape elements, and site design to guide potential future development. Specific design parameters and site requirements for each area of Lake Louise will be provided in the *“Implementation Guidelines”*.



Existing Conditions - Post Hotel



Potential guest room addition at the Post Hotel



Existing Conditions - Hostel



Potential guest room addition at the Hostel



Existing Conditions - Samson Mall



Proposed landscape improvements for Samson Mall

## A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY

### . . . Services for Residents

## POLICY DIRECTION

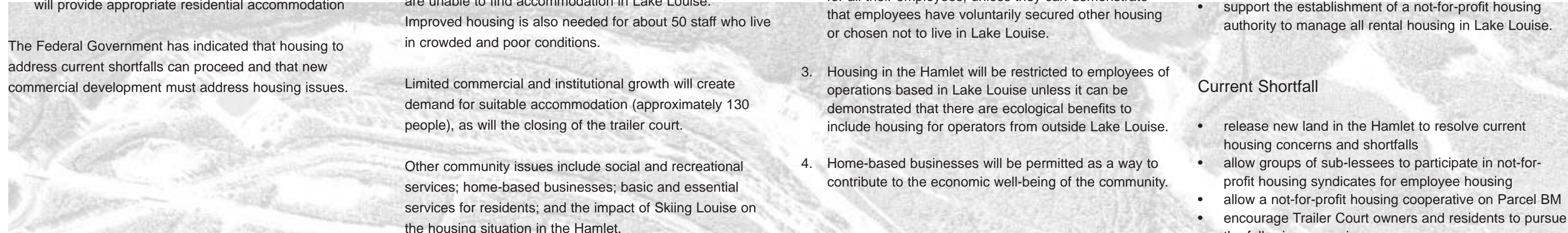
The *Banff National Park Management Plan* describes Lake Louise as a service centre where there will be limited residential accommodation for people who are directly involved in providing basic and essential services.

Community services must meet the immediate needs of residents. Facilities such as a school and hospital will not be permitted.

The management plan also calls for:

- a ceiling on the number of residential units
- a reassessment of land use and changes required for housing
- housing to be addressed as part of the approval process for new commercial development, redevelopment or business licenses
- prohibiting privately owned residences; head lessees, groups of sublessees, non profit groups and institutions will provide appropriate residential accommodation

The Federal Government has indicated that housing to address current shortfalls can proceed and that new commercial development must address housing issues.



## BACKGROUND

Lake Louise's 1,915 residents play a key role in a visitor's experience. They offer information and share their enthusiasm and respect for the mountain environment. Their friendliness, knowledge and commitment to service make visitors feel welcome. Through their actions they can teach people how to become stewards of the environment.

Residents in national park communities have many unique opportunities, including a spectacular location with easy access to outdoor recreational activities. However, considerations such as a limited supply of land and Lake Louise's role as a visitor service centre, mean they can not enjoy all the same amenities available in other communities of a similar size.

Housing is residents' primary concern. In Lake Louise demand currently outstrips supply and some employees live in crowded, substandard conditions. Changing demographics and year-round operation have increased demand for accommodation for long-term and senior staff.

Housing is currently needed for approximately 155 staff who are unable to find accommodation in Lake Louise. Improved housing is also needed for about 50 staff who live in crowded and poor conditions.

Limited commercial and institutional growth will create demand for suitable accommodation (approximately 130 people), as will the closing of the trailer court.

Other community issues include social and recreational services; home-based businesses; basic and essential services for residents; and the impact of Skiing Louise on the housing situation in the Hamlet.

## OBJECTIVES

To provide adequate housing for eligible residents.

To provide the opportunity to build equity through housing cooperatives.

To ensure head lessees meet the requirement to provide adequate housing for their staff.

To ensure services for residents meet basic needs and are consistent with the role of Lake Louise.

To limit the number of residents.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Housing in Lake Louise will continue to be for the use of individuals who qualify as an eligible resident. Renting units to visitors, friends, or staff who do not work for a head lessee/sub-lessee in Lake Louise will not be allowed.
2. Head lessees will continue to provide accommodation for all their employees, unless they can demonstrate that employees have voluntarily secured other housing or chosen not to live in Lake Louise.
3. Housing in the Hamlet will be restricted to employees of operations based in Lake Louise unless it can be demonstrated that there are ecological benefits to include housing for operators from outside Lake Louise.
4. Home-based businesses will be permitted as a way to contribute to the economic well-being of the community.

## KEY ACTIONS

### Housing

- require new housing to consist of high and medium-density units; underground/indoor parking will be a requirement where important to minimize the footprint of development and is feasible
- use the *Staff Housing Guidelines* previously agreed upon by the Lake Louise Advisory Board to determine the size of units
- prohibit private residential leaseholds
- ensure applications for business licenses or changes in use demonstrate how housing requirements will be met
- apply housing guidelines and principles to ski hill operations where there is an impact on the community
- monitor the implementation of the housing strategy and the number of residents
- require head lessees, including Parks Canada, to submit housing strategies outlining how they propose to fulfill their requirements
- enforce the need-to-reside policy
- develop parcel BM as a residential area, primarily for long-term and senior staff; relocate community services to the community centre
- allow minor infilling at Harry's Hill -- one new lot and the conversion of seven bungalows to duplexes
- support the establishment of a not-for-profit housing authority to manage all rental housing in Lake Louise.

### Current Shortfall

- release new land in the Hamlet to resolve current housing concerns and shortfalls
- allow groups of sub-lessees to participate in not-for-profit housing syndicates for employee housing
- allow a not-for-profit housing cooperative on Parcel BM
- encourage Trailer Court owners and residents to pursue the following scenarios:
  - take advantage of new housing provided by head lessees
  - participate in the new housing cooperatives
  - participate in the lot release for housing in Field
- issue building permits for commercial expansion only after current housing shortfalls have been addressed
- provide improved housing for 50 existing staff primarily at Deer Lodge

## Housing for Commercial and Institutional Expansion

- enable head lessees to support their expansion by releasing new land in the Hamlet for residential accommodation
- issue occupancy permits for commercial accommodation expansion only after residential accommodation has been addressed
- identify a small buffer for unanticipated housing needs; identify housing reserve lands for this purpose
- permit a not-for-profit multi-unit rental complex that would not be associated with any head lessee. Because of uncertainty surrounding this initiative, land for the complex will be identified in the housing reserve.

## Residential Growth

The residential ceiling is anticipated to be 2,200 people. This number is an estimate and will not be legislated. It has been identified to assist in developing the housing strategy and to identify anticipated build out. The need-to-reside policy will be the basis for managing the community's population.

Table 2 - Residential Growth (number of people)

Current population (estimate)	1,915
Employees requiring housing (existing shortfall)	155
New residents associated with commercial accommodation growth	130
<b>Residential ceiling</b>	<b>2,200</b>

## Appropriate Services

- use the principles and examples identified below when evaluating services for residents

### Principles to Assess Basic and Essential Services for Residents

Services must not threaten the health of the park or its cultural features.

Activities will promote the safe enjoyment of the natural environment.

Services will meet the immediate needs of residents.

Services will complement those provided in Field and the Town of Banff.

Multi-use facilities will be encouraged.

Principles and approaches for managing services for visitors will apply to services for residents where applicable (see page 15).

### A Guide to Appropriate Services for Residents

The following examples are intended as a guide to appropriate services for residents:

- basic and essential services for visitors (see page 15)
- RCMP detachment
- leisure learning services
- small library
- recreational facilities
- hardware store
- hair stylist/barber
- daycare, preschool, kindergarten
- religious services
- community centre
- car wash
- basic trades

## Home-Based Businesses

- allow people, who already have a need to reside in Lake Louise, to operate a home-based business (e.g., sewing, accounting, writing and editing, etc). Services such as bed & breakfast or rental suites are not permitted in Lake Louise.
- require residents to obtain written permission from their head lessee as well as an annual business license
- ensure the business has no impact on the size of a residence, other residents or visitors, parking, the ecology of the park, cultural features or character.
- ensure home-based businesses adopt the principles of environmental stewardship
- prohibit advertising, posters, etc. on the residence, yards or on other facilities. Promotional material is restricted to the mail, phone book, community notice boards, etc.

## Community Facilities

- create a focal point for community social and recreational activity at the community centre/recreation grounds
- replace the existing community centre with a larger multi-purpose facility that meets a variety of community needs (e.g., recreation, basketball, day care, special events, staff lounge, preschool, kindergarten, small library, multi-denominational religious assemblies, etc.)
- provide picnic facilities for staff events at the recreation grounds
- improve landscaping and washrooms
- re-establish a soccer and football field
- provide access to the Chateau health facilities at affordable rates and reasonable times
- allow construction of a roof over the hockey rink; asphalt the rink surface

Table 3 - Institutional and Industrial Growth (sq.m)

Institution	Existing Size	Proposed Change	Future Total
Community Centre	217	1,115	1,332
Parks Canada	3,000	1,900	4,900
RCMP	434	186	620
Trades Complex	833	0	833
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,484</b>	<b>3,201</b>	<b>7,685</b>

## Trades and Emergency Services

- restrict the trades complex to its current size to protect wildlife movement routes
- allow commercial leaseholders minor additional space for trades and storage
- if necessary, add one floor to the government compound for additional office space
- allow changes to the RCMP site to accommodate other emergency services (e.g., ambulance and fire)

## Achieving the Vision

The following renderings illustrate examples of appropriate architecture, scale, materials, color, landscape elements, and site design to guide potential future development. Specific design parameters and site requirements for each area of Lake Louise will be provided in the "Implementation Guidelines".



Existing Conditions - Moraine Circle



Proposed housing at Moraine Circle



Existing Conditions - Pipestone (Parcel BM)



Proposed housing at Pipestone (Parcel BM)





Proposed Community Centre



Existing Conditions - Community Centre



Proposed housing at Charleston



Existing Conditions - Charleston

## A PLACE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

### POLICY DIRECTION

The management plan commits Parks Canada to the following:

- working with the community and businesses to establish environmental management systems
- demonstrating sound environmental practices
- achieving water quality standards for sewage treatment that are as close as possible to natural conditions in the park; improving the Lake Louise Wastewater Treatment Facility
- introducing a water conservation program

The Minister of Canadian Heritage reiterated the need for leadership in environmental stewardship and stressed that infrastructure must have adequate capacity before growth is permitted.

### BACKGROUND

Environmental stewardship encompasses a range of activities. Individual actions such as composting, or more complex programs such as waste management, all contribute to conserving our natural resources and protecting our environment. Parks Canada, the community, and local businesses continuously strive to reduce the impact of their operations. Waste reduction, water conservation, recycling, sewage treatment targets are just a few of the areas where progress is evident. However, more remains to be done.

Sewage treatment is a major stewardship issue for Lake Louise, where the waste water treatment plant currently operates at capacity during the summer. While the plant is generally performing well, it needs to be upgraded to meet existing demands. Ecological impacts on the Bow River as a result of the addition of nutrients, especially phosphorus, have been observed downstream of the plant. In addition concerns have been expressed that as a result of possible increased commercial growth in the area, there is a potential for increased volumes of waste water in the winter, when

the river is naturally low. This may further compromise the ecological health of the river. Plans are underway to address these concerns.

As a result of concern about the power supply in the Bow Valley, TransAlta reviewed demand at potential build out and its own systems. This review indicates that the existing infrastructure has sufficient capacity to meet future demand created by the low growth outlined in this plan. Other issues include the health of aquatic resources, and air quality.

### OBJECTIVES

To make environmental stewardship a fundamental component of business and institutional operations.

To provide leadership in environmental stewardship.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Parks Canada, residents, businesses, and visitors must work together to promote environmentally sound practices.
2. Environmental stewardship is an ongoing responsibility.
3. Environmental stewardship applies to every facet of an organization's operation. Preventing pollution, assessing environmental impacts, and protecting resources are an integral part of decision-making.
4. Stewardship guidelines will apply to the ski hill where there is an impact on community infrastructure (ie. sewage treatment).

### KEY ACTIONS

#### Energy

- introduce policies and standards that promote energy-efficient building practices
- require all new development proposals to include energy conservation strategies
- submit development proposals to an independent energy audit
- set targets and monitor progress

- investigate the feasibility of purchasing green-power (e.g., wind generated)
- ensure alternative power sources and changes to the power system have no significant negative environmental impact
- work with TransAlta on energy efficiency initiatives and to manage spare capacity
- ensure environmental assessments fully address power requirements and related cumulative impacts; meet yearly with TransAlta to review forecasts.

#### Air Quality

- prohibit the use of diesel generators, except in emergencies
- discourage the use of wood burning fireplaces and open campfires during temperature inversions
- identify ways to reduce emissions from buses

#### Water Quality and Conservation

- develop water withdrawal, return, and storm run-off standards
- use a vegetated buffer to reduce the effects of runoff from parking lots and roads on aquatic resources
- identify water conservation programs when renewing water permits
- require all new development proposals to include water conservation programs
- implement a community program to reduce phosphates

#### Sewage Treatment

- utilize the best available technology to meet the leadership targets identified in the Park Management Plan
- upgrade the plant's capacity to meet existing and future demand
- implement plant treatment capability improvements to reduce the amount of phosphorus being introduced into the Bow River
- explore ways to reduce winter waste water discharge into the river
- enhance monitoring and research initiatives on the health of the river; adjust programs if necessary
- share responsibility for these initiatives with the community and business operators



## Solid Waste

- reduce the amount of solid waste by 50% of the 1988 level of 3,000 tons
- expand recycling services in the community

## Hazardous Waste and Contaminated Sites

- identify and monitor contaminated sites
- prepare a strategy to clean up priority sites

## General

- highlight environmental stewardship initiatives
- adjust leases to reflect the stewardship program
- make environmental stewardship a condition for all development proposals and new or modified business licenses
- ensure Parks Canada adopts the department's environmental management strategy
- integrate a community education program with staff training programs
- adopt purchasing policies that promote the use of environmentally friendly products
- convene an annual 'round table' of head lessees to review and refine environmental stewardship initiatives.

# MANAGING GROWTH

## POLICY DIRECTION

In June 1998, the Minister directed all national park communities to:

- determine an annual growth rate for commercial development
- eliminate the shortfall in residential accommodation by 2005

## BACKGROUND

Growth must be carefully managed to ensure the pace of development respects ecological concerns and the needs of the community.

*During the preparation of the Bow Valley Study, the Banff National Park Management Plan, and the Lake Louise Community Plan, little commercial growth has been allowed.*

While business owners may be impatient with this situation, the need to control growth continues. This will allow for the preparation of human use strategies and the implementation of the No Net Negative Environmental Impact Monitoring Framework.

## OBJECTIVES

To ensure growth does not undermine the parks ecological health.

To phase in commercial growth.

To ensure adequate staff housing is in place.

To support community social needs.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The limits identified in this plan are fixed and may not be exceeded.
2. Expansion of commercial space will take place over time.
3. Staff housing must be available to support growth.
4. Parks Canada will rigidly apply the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and the development review process.
5. Infrastructure must have the capacity and capability to support growth.

## KEY ACTIONS

### Commercial Growth

The following parameters will govern commercial growth.

- ensure development does not exceed the waste water treatment plant's capacity
- allow new commercial development to take place only after improvements at the sewage plant have been made to reduce phosphorus content below current levels in the Bow River, unless it can be demonstrated that development will result in no further ecological impact on the river.
- phase development over a minimum of 10 years
- develop a process for determining when individual operators will be allowed to expand within 3 months of the plans approval
- ensure commercial operators resolve their housing issues (See Place for Community)
- link the pace of development to human use strategies and public transportation to Upper Lake Louise
- exempt projects from phasing limitations if an environmental assessment shows they have significant immediate ecological benefits

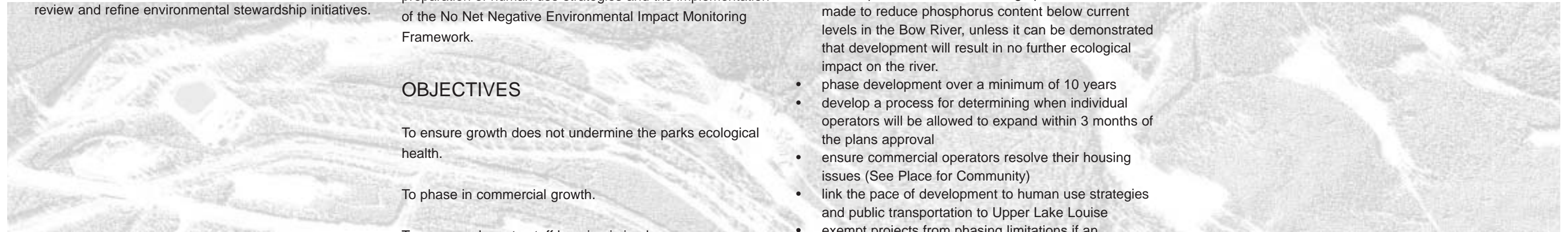
NB - Since the announcement of the conditions for the Chateau Meeting Facility preceded the Minister's announcement on Community Planning Principles, this project will not affect the phasing of other development.

## Services for Residents

- allow housing to proceed immediately
- allow construction of the new community centre to proceed at any time
- adopt new measures to enforce the need-to-reside policy

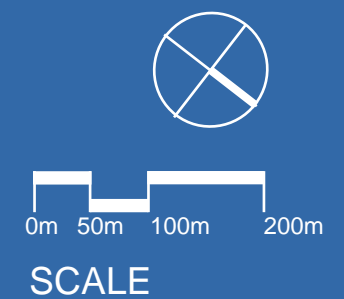
## Hamlet Boundary

- survey the Hamlet boundary and legislate as soon as possible



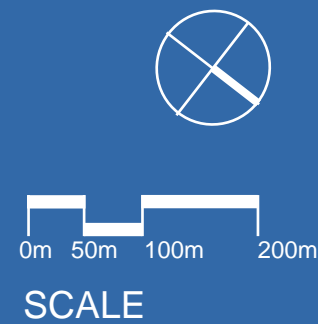


# LOWER LAKE LOUISE (HAMLET) EXISTING CONDITIONS





# LOWER LAKE LOUISE (HAMLET) ACHIEVING THE VISION



## LEGEND

- NEW STAFF HOUSING
- PROPOSED COMMERCIAL - RETAIL
- PROPOSED COMMERCIAL - ACCOMMODATION
- INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES
- HOUSING RESERVE
- PROPOSED LANDSCAPE REHABILITATION

Victoria Glacier, Lake Louise,  
and Chateau Lake Louise





## UPPER LAKE LOUISE EXISTING CONDITIONS

## LEGEND

- PROPOSED STAFF HOUSING
- PROPOSED COMMERCIAL - ACCOMMODATION
- PROPOSED LANDSCAPE REHABILITATION

## CUMULATIVE AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Parks Canada has prepared an environmental assessment that focuses on the cumulative effects of the *Lake Louise Community Plan*. The environmental assessment has been an integral part of the plan preparation.

The review assessed the plan using the following criteria:

- consistency with Parks Canada's policies and plans
- issues of concern at a local, Bow Valley, Banff National Park, and Rocky Mountain Cordillera scale
- other projects that might combine with proposals in the plan to create a negative environmental impact
- public concern

A summary of the findings follows.

## CONSISTENCY

The community plan is consistent with Parks Canada's *Guiding Principles and Operational Policies*, the *Banff National Park Management Plan*, Parks Canada's response to the *Banff-Bow Valley Study* and guidance from the Minister of Canadian Heritage (May 15, 1998 and June 26, 1998).

Further development of existing commercial accommodation will house fewer overnight visitors than the 3,100 permitted. No new commercial accommodation enterprises will be allowed. Residential development to correct the existing shortfall and to support commercial expansion is required. The need-to-reside policy will be enforced.



Grizzly bears are common in the area.

## ISSUES OF CONCERN

The principle concerns are:

- the potential impact on wildlife
- crowding as a result of an increase in the number of visitors
- the capacity of existing infrastructure (e.g., water supply, waste water treatment, power, roads, parking)
- loss of a sense of wildness
- natural views
- cumulative effects

## Wildlife

Human use has already reduced the effectiveness of the Fairview wildlife corridor which passes between the Hamlet and Upper Lake Louise. Wildlife in this area are at risk of habituation to humans and the problems that result from close contact with humans. In addition the Lake Louise landscape management unit has a diminished carnivore habitat effectiveness due to its long history of high human use and activity in the area. Continued high human use, to the level that exists today, will mean that dramatic changes

to habitat effectiveness, either positive or negative, are unlikely. Nevertheless, important improvements will be achieved through an aggressive bear management program, communications, human use strategies for Upper Lake Louise, transportation improvements, rehabilitation of disturbed lands, improved mitigations of the TCH during highway improvements and the recent closure of the 1A highway in Upper Lake Louise. Human use strategies and transportation improvements will be pursued to improve both the quality of the visitor experience and to reduce and mitigate stressful effects on wildlife.

It is imperative to safeguard the more effective Whitehorn wildlife corridor between Harry's Hill and the ski area on the north side of the valley. The valleys surrounding the ski hill are all important wildlife habitats, particularly for grizzly bears. Recent studies reveal grizzly bears in this area display both habituation to and stress from human presence and activity. The plan recognizes this circumstance and proposes only minor infilling in keeping with the recommendations of a review of Harry's Hill. Proposed modifications for summer use at the ski hill will have a positive ecological impact. Parks Canada will also introduce a human use strategy for the popular Skoki area north of the ski hill. These will result in changes to human use in both

areas in order to improve habitat effectiveness and to provide better security for grizzly bears on the north side of the Bow River.

The Lake Louise Hamlet boundary will be reduced at the west end to ensure no diminishment of this preferred wildlife travel route. The trailer park at the east end of the village will be removed and the site reclaimed as natural park land. New residential development will consist of infill development. This will result in a more compact community with a smaller footprint.

Spring and fall are sensitive times for many wildlife species. It is important not to promote shoulder season visitor activities that could conflict with wildlife. Operational procedures will be introduced if necessary. Temporary human use strategies in sensitive areas will be applied as needed. Research and monitoring will determine the need for specific mitigations in the Lake Louise area.

## Day-Use

The challenge to ecological integrity in the Lake Louise area will arise largely as a result of day use from visitors staying at locations other than Lake Louise. More than 20,000 people visit the area every day in the summer. The potential environmental impact of this type of use is likely to be greater than the proposed limited number of additional overnight visitors staying in commercial accommodation at Lake Louise and associated staff increases. For example, at this time, about 70% of the guests at the Chateau Lake Louise arrive in tour coaches originating from another location. They typically stay one night at Lake Louise and have little time for exploration before moving on to a new destination.

The potential contribution additional overnight visitors may have on crowding at Lake Louise (at the shore of Lake Louise and the Moraine Lake area) and the front country has been considered and is thought to be small. Strategies to address current crowding issues will be based on current transportation and front country visitor use studies in the Lake Louise area. These are important mitigations that are being addressed independently of the community plan. Hotel operators will be asked to conduct surveys of the hiking and skiing activities of their guests and staff to assist in implementing effective visitor use strategies.



## Infrastructure

The water supply appears adequate to serve the proposed residential and commercial development. The waste water treatment plant will require an upgrade and programs for phosphorus reductions in the Bow River before any building permits for commercial expansion will be issued unless it can be demonstrated conservation measures will result in no significant impact on the Bow River. Initiatives to reduce waste water discharge volumes during periods of natural low river flows will be explored.

Existing infrastructure can handle the electrical power requirements from the proposed growth. Purchasing of 'green power' will be encouraged. Upgrades will only be considered if they have no significant impact.

No new roads are proposed. Surface parking will be kept to a minimum to help reduce the amount of land needed to support residential and visitor use development. The transportation study will examine public transportation possibilities to eliminate congestion at upper Lake Louise at busy times.

## Scenic Views

Although the community's overall footprint will be reduced, infilling will diminish the sense of openness and create an impression of greater human presence when viewed at close range or from high elevations. Views from the community to mountain peaks will be protected. Views of the community will be softened through landscaping improvements and appropriate choices of building material and colours.

## Wildness

The natural environment of the Bow River Valley, including Lake Louise, is under stress from human occupation and activity. Parks Canada has taken bold steps to protect the lower Bow Valley, and is planning additional measures for other locations. Within this context the Lake Louise Visitor Centre, with limited growth, will continue as a base to support visitor enjoyment of the area. Actions such as new

human use management initiatives, including potential temporary restrictions, may affect some people's sense of wildness.

## Historical and Cultural Heritage

The plan recognizes sites and structures of historical or cultural value and proposes actions to ensure their continuance.

## Heritage Tourism and Interpretation

The introduction of a significant heritage tourism program that increases the awareness, appreciation and understanding of all visitors to Lake Louise will help visitors understand their role in protecting the heritage values of the area. This program will reach far more people than existing or past efforts, and is expected to play an important role in reducing the environmental impacts of visitor use and development.

In support of this initiative, an ongoing educational program will be introduced for all staff in Lake Louise. This program will highlight ecological initiatives and the important role, through their own behaviour, staff can play in sustaining the ecological values of the area.

## Other Projects

The combined effects of other development in the area including Field in Yoho National Park, Outlying Commercial Accommodation, Trans-Canada Highway improvements, and the Lake Louise ski area were considered in the assessment. Reviews or planning programs for each of these are under way or nearing completion. Mitigations identified will be integrated with those of the community plan. The cumulative effects assessment considered the potential combined impact of these developments. Again, the subjects of wildlife conflict, impacts on the Bow River and Louise Creek, and visitor crowding at popular locations are the main concerns. The combined actions of anticipated new human use programs for the area, backcountry areas, Upper Lake Louise and a new Long Range Plan for the ski hill, will likely result in an overall improvement in the area. Satisfactory strategies to avoid or mitigate stresses are identified in the Community plan.

## NO NET NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT FRAMEWORK & GROWTH MANAGEMENT (MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP)

The "no net negative environmental impact monitoring framework" will measure the impact of the community on surrounding park lands. It will be introduced within one year to monitor changes resulting from the plan's implementation. Regular monitoring will continue. The community plan will be reassessed every five years, with the results of monitoring being a key component of the review. If results indicate there is a need for corrective action, additional mitigation will be put in place. Phasing commercial growth and the incremental introduction of appropriate human use strategies will help ensure the objectives of the plan are met. Ongoing park research initiatives will be an important part of this program.

## PUBLIC CONCERN

The public has commented on the future of Lake Louise through consultation programs for the *Banff-Bow Valley Study*, the *Banff National Park Management Plan (1997)*, the Canadian Pacific Hotel's Chateau Lake Louise redevelopment proposal, and the *Lake Louise Community Plan*. In general, there is wide support for adequate residential accommodation. There is qualified support for a modest amount of additional commercial accommodation, provided the environmental integrity of the Lake Louise area can be ensured. Respondents were mostly concerned about the well being of wildlife, minimal ecological impact, responsible stewardship, conservation of resources, and good environmental impact assessments. Some people disagreed with any commercial development, and requested a "no growth" policy.

## CONCLUSION

The *Lake Louise Community Plan* proposes a number of measures to reduce human stress on the natural environment: reduction in the Hamlet boundary to further limit development; rehabilitation of landscapes to their natural state, inside and outside the Hamlet; reduction of non-native plant species; limiting the footprint of development; significant increases in the number of people

reached by interpretation and educational programs; staff education programs; strengthening environmental stewardship; appropriate use guidelines; phased commercial growth; ensuring residents meet the need-to-reside requirements; improvements to the built environment to better reinforce national park values; and protection of important cultural resources.

In addition the no net negative environmental framework will monitor impacts and indicate when corrective action is required.

The introduction of an additional 302 overnight visitors in commercial accommodation and 130 new staff, with development mitigations and in conjunction with the implementation of visitor management strategies, is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects.

On balance, it appears, with mitigation, the potential benefits will likely more than offset the adverse impact associated with the limited increase in commercial growth. No significant negative environmental effects are forecast. All projects arising from the *Lake Louise Community Plan* will be subject to future environmental screening as required by the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and the *National Parks Act*.

This plan is recommended for approval by:



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Tom Lee  
Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada Agency



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Michel Boivin  
Field Superintendent - Lake Louise, Kootenay &  
Yoho National Parks



## HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

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