

A scenic view of snow-capped mountains under a clear blue sky. In the foreground, a wooden bridge with a railing is visible. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent dark grey box.

CANMORE'S REGENERATIVE TOURISM FRAMEWORK

FINAL DRAFT

SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

Canmore is a tourism town. Diverse visitors provide job opportunities that add to a healthy economy, support businesses and services we would not otherwise attract, and enhance a growing global reputation. Tourism also brings challenges including increasing human-wildlife interactions, negative environmental impacts, more congestion, disrespectful behaviours, and a lack of affordability.

The tourism framework is designed to facilitate a thriving tourism economy and ensure the most important concern of the community is addressed: **the regeneration of the essence of Canmore;** an authentic, active mountain town that has a meaningful relationship with the natural environment and Indigenous culture and history.

MISSION

Whether for a day or a lifetime, we are all visitors to Canmore—a culturally and environmentally rich place. We believe that tourism has the ability and responsibility to enhance quality of life for all.

VISION

Canmore is a community of hosts and visitors committed to regenerative tourism through which we leave this beautiful place with a healthier environment, happier community and stronger economy.

VALUES

Respect for people, community, wildlife and the land.

Connection to history, culture, nature and each other.

Play, joy and having fun.

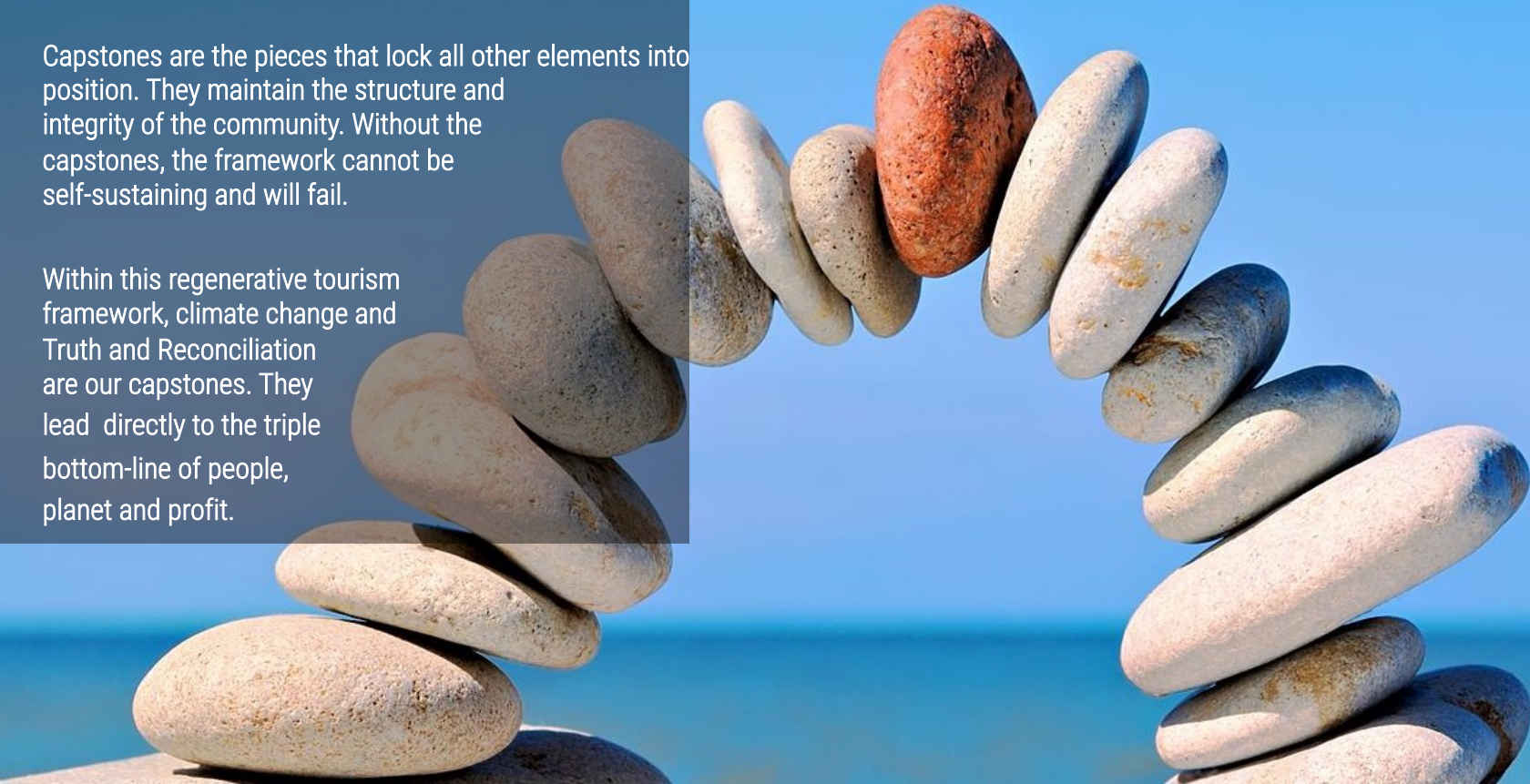
Seven-generations. A perspective that honours our diverse roots and considers the impact over generations to come.

The capstones

The two defining truths of our time are that Truth and Reconciliation and climate change must be addressed. Not with words but with sincere and meaningful actions. These are at the heart of the tourism framework.

Capstones are the pieces that lock all other elements into position. They maintain the structure and integrity of the community. Without the capstones, the framework cannot be self-sustaining and will fail.

Within this regenerative tourism framework, climate change and Truth and Reconciliation are our capstones. They lead directly to the triple bottom-line of people, planet and profit.





The pillars

The strategic pillars that support the capstones are the fundamental elements of the framework that guide actions for the community.

- Tourism awareness
- Ecological integrity
- Wildlife co-existence
- Thriving industry
- Working together
- Affordability
- Regenerative leadership
- Informed visitors
- Sustainable funding

The capstones

Meaningful action on climate change

Our climate change approach will align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals:

- Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters.
- Integrate climate change measures into policies, strategies and planning.
- Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management.
- Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

Building good relations with the Indigenous community

This starts by working more closely and collaboratively with the Stoney Nakoda, Métis Region 3 and other Indigenous communities to identify appropriate actions. Within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding, develop a working relationship with these communities to guide tourism development.

Specific opportunities the Task Force recommends to be considered include:

- Work with the provincial government to give the mountains, lakes and rivers around Canmore their traditional Indigenous names.
- Strengthen relationships between all Indigenous neighbours and the Canmore community.
- If they are interested, support the Stoney Nakoda to share their history and culture with visitors through exhibitions and demonstrations.
- Provide learning opportunities for tourism businesses and their workers on Indigenous culture, history and protocol.

The strategic pillars

Tourism awareness

Tourism is the largest sector of Canmore's economy and has a significant impact on quality of life both positive and negative. Yet current awareness of the benefits of tourism in Canmore is low. Communications to create a more knowledgeable community will improve the ability to make smart, long-term decisions.

Key actions

- Share and discuss the results of the framework with the community.
- To generate greater resident understanding, develop educational materials and communications campaigns that speak to the importance of tourism in our community.
- Support ongoing communications of tourism impacts including the contribution of tourism to a diversity of businesses and services.
- Create shoulder season events for residents to appreciate and experience tourism businesses.
- Monitor and address community concerns with tourism through meaningful conversations.

Ecological integrity

All tourism, no matter how thoughtful, has an impact on the community, the wildlife and the environment. It is critical that the biodiversity, ecological function and processes of our place be maintained. Ecological integrity is essential to the short and long-term success of the tourism economy.

Key actions

- Determine the sustainable human capacity of Canmore's natural and adjacent areas to minimize impact.
- Develop a strategic trails plan in conjunction with partners, including Parks Canada, Alberta Parks, Stoney Nakoda.
- Embrace non-vehicular transportation (bikes, e-bikes, scooters, transit, walking).
- Create a regenerative tourism assessment ensuring it is included in the development and implementation of all tourism-related businesses.

Wildlife co-existence

Canmore is a global leader when it comes to humans and wildlife sharing a home together. The acknowledgement, appreciation and respect for the wildlife whose space we live, visit and recreate in, is a privilege and a responsibility for Canmore residents.

Key actions

- Prioritize trail creation and maintenance that focuses on limiting wildlife and human interaction.
- Celebrate and educate visitors and residents on the realities and opportunities of wildlife coexistence.
- Provide safety information and access to bear spray to all who live and visit the community.
- Share local knowledge and experience on what we all can do whether living, visiting or playing to avoid wildlife encounters in Canmore.

The strategic pillars

Thriving industry

A sustainable, profitable and thriving tourism industry supports Canmore's entire economy and is supported by the Canmore community.

Key actions

- Encourage membership in Tourism Canmore Kananaskis.
- Work with industry and the town to streamline permitting processes to increase adaptability to changing business realities.
- Support Indigenous tourism development in partnership with Indigenous Tourism Alberta.
- Provide environmental and wildlife awareness training to front-line tourism workers.
- Responsibly market the destination, focusing on the principles of regenerative tourism.
- Work with TCK and other partners to disperse travel throughout the year in appropriate locations.
- Support the implementation of Tourism Canmore Kananaskis' strategic plan.

Working together

The strength of any community is rooted in the relationships between the people that live and visit within it. While the Town of Canmore can only directly control what is within the town, tourism has fluid boundaries. By partnering with other key stakeholders, Canmore can lead a more cohesive and holistic tourism policy.

Key actions

- Encourage tourism operators to engage local experts and volunteers as ambassadors.
- Create a regional policy working group that includes Alberta Parks, Parks Canada, TCK, MD of Bighorn, Banff and Lake Louise Tourism and Indigenous Tourism Alberta.
- Create an ongoing Town of Canmore Tourism Roundtable with an expanded membership that provides recommendations and guidance directly to Council on all aspects of tourism, based on the outcomes of this Task Force and framework.

Affordability

Across the tourism sector, communities struggle with affordable housing and Canmore is no exception. Tourism operators feel the strain as well as they endeavour to staff their businesses. Supporting affordability and living wages will help address this structural issue.

Key actions

- Work with community partners to create programs that support livability and affordability .
- Elevate the importance of Increasing the supply of affordable housing in Canmore.
- Provide incentives to the hospitality sector to provide affordable staff accommodation.

The strategic pillars

Regenerative leadership

Regenerative tourism recognizes the need to sustain people and planet, but also the imperative for continual improvement over the generations. Regenerative tourism is not anti-growth. It simply asks that we grow the things that matter most to us in ways that benefit the community and the environment and never at the expense of others.

Key actions

- Consult Indigenous businesses in the development of the framework for regenerative business practices
- Educate and create regenerative tourism ambassadors for people who interact with visitors and locals.
- Create a regenerative tourism recognition program for businesses.
- Build a centre to teach regenerative tourism principles. Initially for the local community, growing to serve Western Canada and beyond.

Informed visitors

Visitor education is an opportunity to not only increase knowledge about the history and culture of Canmore and Indigenous peoples, but it also is an opportunity to welcome visitors who more wisely enjoy and respect the wilderness.

Key actions

- Create a global centre of excellence for professional guides.
- Create educational signage at trailheads, lake shores and garbage cans that educate visitors about respectful behaviours.
- Provide education and support for visitors around wildlife co-existence.
- Encourage safe and respectful outdoor recreation and play.

Sustainable funding

New ideas require additional resources to support them. Funding must be generated to enable this framework. This will require close partnership between the Town of Canmore and Tourism Canmore Kananaskis.

Key actions

- Request the Town of Canmore to support the ongoing implementation of the framework.
- Increase advocacy and lobbying efforts to secure resort municipality status.
- Explore and secure funding from all businesses in town to support tourism and the tourism framework.

Next steps

1. Review, discuss and revise the tourism framework through engagement with the Stoney Nakoda and other Indigenous partners.
2. Strike a Tourism Roundtable with the mandate to review key actions, prioritize, define roles and build a short-, medium- and long-term implementation plan.
3. Report back to the community to share research and engagement findings, the regenerative tourism framework and the role of the Tourism Roundtable.
4. Share the framework with the tourism community, broader business community and regional tourism partners.

