



Rossland’s Sustainability Planning on the Ground – From Planning to Reality!

ROSSLAND’S INTEGRATED COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING PROCESS (ICSP)

Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP) can have a powerful effect on land use planning. Rossland, BC, a mountain Resort Municipality is putting their sustainability plan into action through land use policies.

This case study provides details on the work the City is doing regarding land management to align with community planning documents. It describes the journey to becoming a more sustainable Rossland and can provide lessons that are relevant to other communities.

Rossland’s Challenge

Rossland has experienced some of the common resort community growing pains: pressure for resort and recreation development, housing price increases, and changes to demographics. In order to help them to manage and address

these changes, the City of Rossland became one of British Columbia’s early adopters of Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP). Rossland has had their sustainability plan, Visions to Action – Strategic Sustainability Plan, or SSP in place since January of 2008.

Rossland’s Planning Process

Rossland started the Visions to Action process in 2007, as a long term planning strategy incorporating the community’s hopes and desires for the future.

Rossland is an early adopter of Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP)

ICSPs and Land Use Planning

Sustainability planning is about planning for the long term future of a community – culture, environment, economy and society.

Land use is an important piece of this planning as it can impact all of the pillars of sustainability.

Land use can affect the appearance and structure of the community and environmental impacts.

Land use affects the economic cost of providing services. Land use affects the ability of the residents to connect and interact and their ability to

celebrate together as a community.

Land use planning processes will help a community align priorities and actions, to develop a framework for actions over the long term and may even excite residents.





Rossland Visioning Sessions
photo courtesy Rossland Sustainability Commission

We were amazed at the turnout. Young and old alike all wanted to be a part of the planning process.

– Kelvin Saldern

The SSP planning process that Rossland undertook involved extensive community consultation, the inclusion of creativity, fun and community building and resulted in an action-oriented plan that was adopted by Rossland City Council. Council also established (by bylaw) a Sustainability Commission in February 2009 to oversee implementation and ongoing management of the Visions to Action Strategic Sustainability Plan. City staff are working actively to implement suggested policy changes that arose from the process.

Since adoption, the City's SSP process has included many volunteers on task forces, coordinated through means of a central Sustainability Commission. Other players in the community are tackling the goals of the SSP as well; Rossland REAL Food, the Visions for Small Schools, Neighborhood of Learning, the Heritage Commission, the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Rossland have all played an active role. However, we are going to look primarily at the actions of one of the most important players, the City of Rossland.

Visions to Action – Strategic Sustainability Plan (SSP)

The SSP provides a clear vision for Rossland's future with an inspiring vision for the year 2030. (see sidebar for 2030 Vision).

The Plan sets out guidance in 11 key focus areas: Land Management, Natural Environment and Resource Lands, Community Economic Development, Recreation and Leisure, Housing & Affordability, Transportation, Intergenerational Care & Learning, Sense of Community, Energy & Air Quality, Water & Solid Waste Management, Governance.

These guidelines are meant to be used throughout the community when decisions are made. Each focus area also has an end state goal to steer the guidance and decisions.

The Land Management end state goal is as follows:

- **Building** a community that is a compact, diverse and green community
- **Land use** is efficient and avoids sprawl
- **Neighbourhood** communities are diverse and complete
- **Community** is integrated with the natural environment
- **Development** is in accord with community values
- A **vibrant** downtown is the social focus of the community
- **Development** standards are green

Rossland's 2030 Vision

In 2030, Rossland is a resilient alpine community and a leader in balancing social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

Celebrated for its unique cultural heritage, small-town charm and world-class natural amenities, Rossland offers residents and visitors alike extensive recreational opportunities, trail networks and green spaces. The thriving, diverse economy embraces innovation and entrepreneurship, and its citizens actively contribute to a welcoming, vibrant community that is safe, inclusive and affordable



Land Management Implementation

Over the last three years Rossland has taken large strides towards implementing the Land Management goals. (See Table 1 on the following page)

From the start of the process in 2007, the City of Rossland planned to align the City's actions with the SSP. When the SSP was complete the Planning and Development Department initiated a revamp of both the Official Community Plan and the zoning bylaws. Through this process, they were able to embed the directives of the SSP into land management policy.

The SSP, OCP and zoning bylaw documents provide a strong framework for the recommendations of the community to be applied to the built form and character of the community. The SSP influences many of the recommendations made to Council around development decisions, budgeting, water conservation and other new policy development.



Creative Community Engagement

Rossland delivered a robust community outreach and engagement effort, which included:

- Project Website and Newsletters
- Sustainability Seminar
- Futures Seminar and Workshop & Community Survey
- Public Visioning Workshop
- Seniors' Discussion Group
- Student Art Projects
- Developers and Business Sessions
- Visions Feedback Form
- Actions Workshop
- Community Design Charrette

For information on how to deliver creative and effective community engagement listen to the Smart Planning and Columbia Basin Trust Webinar *Reaching Expectations* on www.smartplanningbc.ca

Impacts of Land Use Policy

It is sometimes difficult to visualize, or even understand, the impact on the community that changes to policies, processes and bylaws can have.

Table 1 demonstrates the anticipated impact of land use policy and procedural changes. The table is a summary of the vast scope of work that has been accomplished in the time since the adoption of the SSP and reflects a desire on the part of the City to act on the vision of the community as articulated in the SSP.

There are some key land use actions that the City of Rossland is taking that will have a far reaching and long term effect on the future form and development of the community. The integration of multiple approaches to creating sustainable land use makes these set of policies innovative. For a comprehensive list of the individual actions they are taking see Appendix 1: OCP Land Management Policies Resulting from SSP.

The Way Forward

Rossland's Land Management policies work in an integrated way. The policies address some of the broader concerns as Rossland works toward becoming a more sustainable community.

These land use decisions and new policies have set the stage for a sustainable Rossland in 2030. The impacts link to the 2030 vision with the realization of the following:

- a **compact community** connected with trail linkages;
- a community where citizens are aware of the need for **conservation**
- a community that has ample opportunities to **connect and interact** with each other;
- a community that has reduced the tax burden by developing in a **compact** way;
- **using resources wisely** avoiding the need for expanded water and sewer capacity;
- a community that doesn't have to rely entirely on vehicle travel;
- a community that has significantly **reduced its green house gas footprint** and met its goals for carbon reduction (33% below 2007 levels by 2020).

Becoming a sustainable community is a long term journey. By adopting policies that reflect the SSP, Rossland's City Council and staff are setting the groundwork for a compact, walkable, healthy community over the long term. Many of these changes will take years or even decades to show their effects, but the stage has been set for Rossland to reach its vision of a sustainable future. ■

Table 1: Summary of Impacts of Land Use Policy Changes Resulting from Strategic Sustainability Plan (SSP)

LAND USE POLICY CHANGE	IMPACT
Updated Zoning Bylaw: Infill Zone and new smaller lot sizes	Reduced footprint of development, reduced need for infrastructure expansion, increased tax base to support existing services, potential for larger mix of housing sizes and costs, provide clarity and certainty to those wanting to develop on small lots.
Updated Zoning Bylaw: Mixed use zones	Creates areas of town where people live and work, brings vitality to core after hours and can promote safety, walkability and general community health – also includes provision to ensure long term services for residents are maintained.
Updated Zoning Bylaw: Industrial Land Retention Policies	Provides foundation for future industrial development and potential for an increase in local employment and economic diversification.
Update Zoning Bylaw: New recreation and park policies	Policies in place to create new park areas for different types of recreation – can lead to more inclusive and active community. Support for cycling facilities can reduce GHGs, obesity and increase population health.
Water Meters	Reduced water usage, increased education around water conservation. Reduced pressure on water related infrastructure - reduced demand can delay the need for building new infrastructure for a growing population.
Budget for Trail Network	Increased ability for residents to walk to services and recreation, increased potential for healthy, active citizens, and increased desirability of community as a vacation and migration destination.
Community Gardens	Increase in local food availability, especially to those with small or unsuitable lots, increase education around healthy food habits, increased connection to food sources, potential for increased social networks and interactions.
Governance	The SSP provides framework and education for city staff and community members to show leadership.
Tree Preservation Bylaw	Reduces the impact that development has on the land base and protects existing trees and landscapes, may increase presence of mature trees and reduce energy consumption due to shading.
Cut and Fill Bylaw	May reduce potential for erosion, reduces need for landscaping and reclamation work.



See Appendix 1 for a comprehensive Land Use Policy list

This case study was compiled by Smart Planning for Communities, a program of the Fraser Basin Council

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Appendix 1

OCP Land Management Policies Resulting from SSP

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

2.2 POLICIES

.1 Encourage development of mixed use retail, service, restaurant and medium density residential development on Washington Street and nearby lanes.

.2 Consider incentives, such as density bonusing and DCC credits for development occurring in existing infill sites that are vacant or underutilized.

.3 Consider incentives for the reuse and adaptation of existing buildings.

.4 Discourage development requiring further extension of municipal services.

.5 Encourage a diverse mixture of housing types, shops and services in Rossland.

.6 Encourage comprehensive development zoning where appropriate to provide for diverse housing types and uses.

.7 Encourage cluster developments which are designed to protect the natural features on the site, to minimize the on site footprint of the development and to minimize road lengths.

.8 Encourage mixed use residential and commercial development in the downtown core.

.9 Direct higher density developments to the Downtown Core and Mid Town Transition area.

.10 Consider higher density developments anywhere in Rossland on a project by project basis considering the character and scale of adjacent uses, proximity to transit routes, public facilities and commercial nodes and traffic and parking impacts.

.11 Consider creating a Development Permit Area to further guide infill development.

.12 Collaborate with the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary (RDKB), surrounding landowners and neighbouring jurisdictions in preparing a “Fringe” OCP using the SSP as a context for this initiative.

.13 Consider defining medium and long term growth boundaries that concentrate growth in clearly defined areas that include the traditional town of Rossland, Red Mountain Resort and Redstone Golf Resort.

.14 Establish a sustainability checklist including a high level screening test and incorporate it into all development applications.

PARKS AND TRAILS

15.2 POLICIES

.1 Develop an Integrated Greenspace, Trails and Recreation Master Plan that considers the community’s requirements and clearly sets out which parks have priority for improvement when funding permits. In addition, it should include a plan for revitalizing, establishing or extending parks.

.2 Consideration will be given to density bonusing of development proposals which include a high degree of parkland dedication and open space.

.4 Recognize the significance of the “Chinese Gardens” by developing an interpretive centre and incorporating this into the parks and trails system.

.5 Support the establishment of pedestrian linkages beneath/over/across Highway 3B for year-round access between:

- a. The Red Mountain Base area and the Blackjack Cross Country Ski Club;
- b. The lower Rossland Happy Valley Area and the Redstone Golf Course area, with the specific intent on establishing a connection to link the historic Rossland cemetery with the historic Wagon Road.
- c. Pinewood neighbourhood area and lower Rossland.

.6 Continue working with and supporting local trail user groups to create and maintain a comprehensive trail inventory.

.7 Seek easements on private land parcels that currently host trails wherever possible.

.8 Identify and secure pedestrian corridors between neighbourhoods and amenities in town, and between town and the resorts, and between the town and the trail system.

.9 Ensure trail connectivity is maintained when new areas are developed in Rossland or across municipal boundaries.

.12 Work with other user groups and other agencies to explore multi use corridors in Rossland to avoid user conflicts.

.13 Encourage the development of a trail along Trail Creek.

.14 Explore ways to restore the old Rail-grade through town.

.15 Support the development of informational brochures to highlight the linkages within settled areas of Rossland.

.17 Support collaboration with the region’s municipalities to identify and develop offroad pedestrian/cycling routes, specifically a Rossland to Nelson route via Salmo and Castlegar and to Christina Lake via the Old Cascade Highway.

HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL LAND

18.2 GENERAL POLICIES

.1 Establish a housing task force for Rossland with a mandate to research housing needs and work with stakeholders to implement solutions that will encourage a socioeconomic and demographic mix.

.2 Develop non-market housing solutions for various demographic cohorts with consideration to age and income.

.3 Encourage the development of a housing project to create seniors housing that is prioritized for local seniors moving out of single-family homes.

.4 Encourage development that does not require extension of municipal services.

.5 Encourage secondary suites provided the suite is registered with the City of Rossland; the property can conform to the parking and setback regulations set out in the City of Rossland Zoning Bylaw; the suite conforms to all building and fire codes; and the presence of a suite does not detract from the quality of life of nearby residents.

.6 Encourage home based businesses where the use is deemed appropriate and not intrusive within the neighbourhood, is licensed and has adequate parking.

.7 Encourage Bed and Breakfast operations provided the facility is appropriately located, meets current regulations and bylaws and is not intrusive within the neighbourhood.

.8 Support the use of City owned land to encourage the development of alternative housing.

.10 Monitor growth of second home ownership and assess the long term impacts of second home ownership on the community.

.11 Encourage and support employee housing.

18.3 RESIDENTIAL POLICIES

1. The following policies apply to the lands designated as Residential on the attached Schedule B Land Use Map.

2. Encourage development that enhances and maintains Rossland's heritage.

3. Encourage higher density multi-family uses, especially nearest the Downtown Core and the Mid Town Neighbourhood Special Planning Area.

4. Ensure all new multi-family residential developments, including duplexes, are designated as a Development Permit Area to ensure new multi-family developments are compatible with the scale, character and heritage of existing residential neighbourhoods.

5. Encourage a wide range of housing types, tenures and organizational frameworks including ownership, lease, rental, strata title, side by side duplex and co-op housing.

6. Consider density bonusing or other development incentives in return for providing affordable or special needs housing or green buildings.

7. Neighbourhood commercial such as small scale cafes or pedestrian oriented retail services can be considered in any Residential Neighbourhood designation subject to the following:

- A location near key intersections (i.e. intersection of two arterial roads or a collector and an arterial road) or on a major road;
- Adjacent to other neighbourhood amenities such as parks or existing commercial uses;
- Site design and building form and character that complements the adjacent residential neighbourhood; and,
- Appropriate zoning.

8. Allow the use of comprehensive development zones to allow a wider mix of uses and housing types.

9. Encourage cluster development to allow the protection of natural features on site, to minimize the on-site footprint of the development and to minimize road lengths.

10. Consider higher density developments anywhere in Rossland on a project by project basis. When reviewing rezoning proposals for multi-family residential development, the City shall consider the following criteria in determining the appropriateness of the development:

- Walking distance to commercial, recreational, public/institutional centres, or parks;
- Proximity to major collectors or arterial roads in order to reduce traffic impacts on local roads and facilitate transit service;
- Adequacy of existing services;
- Potential of the proposed development to provide a range of housing types and tenures that are suitable for seniors, households with low and moderate incomes, and persons with special needs;
- An appropriate transition between lower density housing, and compatibility with adjacent land uses;

The range of densities and housing forms in the residential neighbourhood;
- Aesthetic quality including massing, scale, building form, view and shadow impacts;
- Protection of the proposed development from natural hazards;

11. Encourage infill housing in order to improve economic efficiency regarding municipal services and maintenance. To that end, support residential lots, in areas serviced by municipal water and sewer, in areas that can satisfy the requirements of the City of Rossland Subdivision and Servicing Bylaw and Zoning Bylaw.

12. The City of Rossland will pursue green building guidelines and incentives for all buildings, including residential and multiunit residential buildings.

13. Infill (small lot) development in existing residential neighbourhoods may contrast with the character of the surrounding structures in terms of lot size, building massing, height, setbacks, form and character. To address this, the City will consider creating a Development Permit Area (Intensive Residential) to further guide infill development.

14. Consider Guest House rezoning applications in those areas with the following criteria:

- i. The density of Guest Homes in the vicinity of the property which is being proposed to be rezoned for Guest Home use;
- ii. The road network and parking issues that may exist or arise in the vicinity of the property which is being proposed to be rezoned for Guest Home use; and
- iii. Future land use changes which may occur in the vicinity of the property which is being proposed to be rezoned for Guest Home use in light of objectives and policies of the Official Community Plan.

.16 Recognize the importance of mobile homes as an affordable housing element and permit their location in the mobile home park zone as outlined in the Zoning Bylaw.

18.4 RESORT RESIDENTIAL POLICIES

The following policies apply to the lands designated as Resort Residential on the attached Schedule B Land Use Map.

.3 Encourage development that is clustered to promote protection of sensitive lands.

.4 Encourage integration of alternate transportation methods such as walking, skiing and cycling, into the design of developments.

.5 Consider small scale commercial and hospitality uses that support and enhance the resort experience.

.7 Support the establishment of small commercial nodes within the resort accommodations in order that resort visitors can shop for basic commodities without driving.

18.5 RURAL RESIDENTIAL POLICIES

.1 The following policies apply to the lands designated as Rural Residential on the attached Schedule B Land Use Map.

.6 Use the existing zoning to preserve the greenbelt surrounding Rossland.

DOWNTOWN CORE

19.2 POLICIES

The following policies apply to the lands designated as Downtown Core on the OCP Schedule B Land Use Map.

- .2 Mixed uses (upper floor residential with ground floor commercial or office) shall be encouraged in the Downtown Core area.
- .3 Ensure all new development and major renovations and expansions within the Downtown Core are of a high quality and contribute to the heritage and character of Rossland. To this end, Council intends to enforce the Development Permit Area guidelines set out in Section 32 of this Bylaw. These guidelines will be reviewed and updated to ensure ease of understanding and use.
- .4 The area designated Downtown Core on Schedule B is intended to function as the primary shopping, business, tourist, cultural and social node of the community with a distinctive quality and sense of place. As such, a broad range of concentrated pedestrian-scale uses including residential, retail, office, financial, institutional, service, entertainment, food and beverage and visitor accommodation are supported.
- .5 Encourage higher density residential within the Downtown Core.
- .6 Encourage redevelopment of underutilized lands and the development of vacant lands for mixed commercial-residential uses.
- .8 Collaborate with Ministry of Transportation on the proposed Columbia Ave resurfacing in order to introduce natural landscape features, traffic calming designs, improved parking and a designated, separated bike lane.
- .9 The Downtown Core shall be as pedestrian and bicycle oriented as possible.
- .10 Further develop Washington St and nearby lanes as the location of mixed use retail, service, restaurant and medium density residential development.
- .11 Continue to support a downtown and streetscape revitalization program.
- .12 Supports capital investments in Downtown, including streetscape improvements, street furniture, public art and landscaping to increase the attractiveness of Downtown.

.13 Comprehensive trail connections and cyclist/pedestrian routes to and within the Downtown are a priority in the downtown transportation system.

.14 Encourage outdoor seating for restaurants, cafes and bars provided that surrounding residential neighbourhoods and pedestrian movement are not adversely affected.

COMMERCIAL LAND

20.2 GENERAL POLICIES

- .1 Big-box commercial developments shall be discouraged from locating in the Rossland area.
- .3 Encourage pedestrian scale design that features architectural treatments: benches, trail linkages, directional signage via international symbols, public art and dark sky lighting.
- .4 Encourage and maintain a difference in the character of the town and that of Red Mountain Resort. Enhance the cultural and heritage aspects of the Downtown Core while maintaining the resort as an individual node that complements the Downtown with an individual Alpine style. Ensure development within the Downtown Core enhance s and maintains the current heritage and 'Miner's Town' style.
- .7 Commercial Development shall be encouraged to locate in nodes that promote pedestrian/cycling accessibility. Those lands designated as Downtown Core, Mixed Use, Gateway Commercial and Resort Commercial are areas where commercial development is appropriate with the Downtown Core as the primary commercial, cultural and social node of the community.
- .9 Support mixed use development on the lands designated as Downtown Core, Mixed Use, and Resort Commercial on the attached Schedule B Land Use Map.
- .10 Encourage revitalization through commercial development in neglected downtown core areas.
- .11 Neighbourhood commercial is considered an integral feature of complete communities as it provides for the daily requirements of local residents, reduces automobile reliance and provides a focal point and identity for the neighbourhood it serves.

20.3 GATEWAY COMMERCIAL POLICIES

- .1 The following policies apply to the lands designated as Gateway Commercial on the attached Schedule B Land Use Map.
- .3 Encourage development within the Gateway Commercial area that enhances the sense of arrival into Rossland.

20.4 MIXED USE POLICIES

- .1 The following policies apply to the lands designated as Mixed Use on the attached Schedule B Land Use Map.
- .2 Encourage development of mixed use buildings with commercial development on the ground floor and residential development on upper floors.
- .4 Encourage appropriate commercial uses that complement rather than compete with the Downtown Core, such as restaurants, professional offices, personal services, and studio space.
- .5 Encourage pedestrian scale elements which blend in with the character of surrounding neighbourhoods.
- .7 Encourage the development of soft impact production uses in structures which blend in and co-exist with residential development in the area designated Proposed Mixed Use/Small Scale Production on Schedule Bland Use Map. Require a rezoning application to determine zoning specifics such as location, uses and density.

INDUSTRIAL LAND 21.2 POLICIES

- .2 Encourage new industries that are relatively clean and environmentally sensitive to locate within Rossland.
- .5 Ensure that industrial operations minimize potential negative impacts on ecological systems and processes and the urban environment, particularly with respect to air and water quality and noise and traffic levels.
- .7 Consider development of a "Light Industrial Business Park" in the Old Cascade Highway area. The ultimate goal will be a comprehensively planned area of high aesthetic quality achieved through appropriate design guidelines and standards.
- .9 Consider collaborating with neighbouring and regional governments to establish a regional supply of employment lands in close proximity to Rossland.