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Please find attached my final report of the Bragg Creek Area Structure Plan Vision Committee (the Committee). In 2024, I was tasked with the role of Chair of the Committee and to document the discussion and outcome, a role that I considered to be a honour and privilege. As an outsider to the community and with no conflicts of interest (I am a full-time faculty member in the planning school at the University of Alberta), I strived to be as objective and complete as possible. The final Vision is my best effort to capture the discussions of the Committee.

Overall, I was impressed with the collaborative spirit of all Committee members and while there was different perspectives and priorities, there were seldom any significant disagreements. All clearly cared for their community and want a sustainable future for the Hamlet and the Hamlet Growth Area. Committee members recognized the need to plan for growth and that growth can be an opportunity. The aspiration for a regenerative community speaks to the need for a holistic approach to balancing development with the complex ecology of the area which is it's greatest asset. Growth pressures from being part of a growing County and region are felt but can be managed with careful planning and working with the community. There is an understandable frustration with a lack of local governance and that will should be addressed through the ASP planning process and beyond.

Bragg Creek is a special place, cherished by its residents and the broader region. There is truly an opportunity for the Hamlet to be a model community of responsible development within a sensitive forest ecosystem. It is my hope that the Vision is the start of a successful ASP process and many thanks to all the Committee members for their time, understanding, and effort.

Sincerely,

Neal LaMontagne

# **Bragg Creek Area Structure Plan Vision Committee**

**Final Report**  
March 2025

**Submitted by**  
Neal LaMontagne RPP MCIP  
Chair, Bragg Creek Area Structure Plan Vision Committee

## Introduction

This report outlines the final Vision developed by the Bragg Creek Area Structure Plan (ASP) Vision Committee (the 'Committee'). The Committee, a group of eight local community members representing business, community services, environment, and resident perspectives, met nine times since June 2024 with the intent to develop a plan vision and provide insight and guidance for the ASP plan process to be launched in 2025.

The vision, included within as Appendix A, provides policy direction for the ASP update process. The updated ASP will be a primary planning policy document of Rocky View County specific to Bragg Creek and the Hamlet Growth Area. The Vision is broad in scope, addressing a vision for the plan and the community as a whole, and specific guidance for land use, economy, environment, community amenity, and mobility. Although there were disagreements (as to be expected) on details, the Committee was generally in agreement on the key themes, all which revolve around a profound care for the community and desire to balance growth and change with protecting the qualities of place that draws residents and visitors there in the first place.

## Process

The Committee was formed by Rocky View County in 2024 with the purpose of providing recommendations on the direction of the ASP project to Council. Committee members were appointed to equally represent business, community services, environment and resident perspectives (Committee membership is included in Appendix B) and a Chair was commissioned to manage and document the meetings and the emerging vision. The Chair was chosen to be objective and outside the local community and Rocky View County. The Committee meetings were also staffed by a member of the County planning staff and were recorded for public viewing. Agendas and minutes for each meeting were provided by the Chair and made public via the County website.

The Committee met eight times from June to September 2024 and reconvened in January 2025 to finalize the plan Vision. Presentations were provided by the County on infrastructure servicing and the economic market study. Meetings were conducted on a consensus model and the effort was to identify issues and opportunities for each plan topic area (Land Use, Environment, Economy, Community Amenities and Facilities, and Mobility). In general, there was broad consensus on high level issues and opportunities and debate on details and priorities. The final Vision was broadly agreed upon by the Committee with the understanding that it would be impossible to capture every nuance but the goal was to reflect Committee priorities and inform the upcoming ASP process.

## Key Themes and Observations

As Chair, I observed a number of key themes worthy of mention. First and foremost is a genuine care for the community and it's natural environment and an openness to growth and change but that future development must proceed in balance with and respect for the ecological integrity of the area. Other key themes include:

1. **An inclusive community.** Bragg Creek struggles with affordability, especially for local workers, and needs more diverse housing options that work for people at different stages of life. Beyond housing, there is a need for accessibility throughout the community and the ability for all ages and abilities to move through and access local facilities and amenities.
2. **A vision for regenerative development.** Regenerative development principles emphasize a holistic approach to managing the relationship between the built and natural

environments. As the community develops, projects should be designed to not only limit environmental impacts but create a net-positive impact. This can be achieved through thoughtful site and building design to repair and reconnect ecological assets and creating a circular relationship with the larger environment.

3. **A sustainable visitor economy.** Bragg Creek has long been a major visitor destination, particularly for day trips to visit local businesses and access the diverse recreational opportunities. There is opportunity to grow the visitor experience and economy but to be sustainable, it must develop in balance with community principles, resident livability, and ecological integrity. Further, there is a desire to develop a more well-rounded visitor economy attracting more economic activity through the week and the seasons.
4. **A community living within limits.** From the beginning of Committee discussions, there was an emphasis on the awareness of Bragg Creek as part of a larger ecosystem and set of landscapes and habitats, at the headwaters of the Elbow River, and located in the forest. The theme of respecting the ecological and infrastructural limits of the place was recurrent but also recognizing the risks of flood and fire and the liability of developing without regard for the environment was a key concern.
5. **A governance challenge.** Bragg Creek is a hamlet and a unique place in the larger Rocky View County, Calgary region, and South Saskatchewan river system. There is a frustration with the lack of local decision-making and a strong desire to ensure the ASP process and subsequent development reflects community priorities and qualities.

## Conclusion

The ASP Vision process was remarkable for the collaborative spirit of the Committee, the consensus among varied perspectives, and the shared desire to contribute positively to the future of Bragg Creek. The final Vision is the outcome of considerable time and energy on behalf of the volunteer Committee and provides a strong foundation for the ASP planning process.

## Appendix A - Overall Plan Vision

Bragg Creek is a community celebrated for its character, strong sense of identity, and regenerative approach to co-existing and enjoying the dynamic forest ecosystem and its wildlife. As it evolves, the community remains steadfast in its commitment to preserving and enhancing the qualities that make it a beloved destination for residents and visitors alike. Guided by a deep respect for its role within the interconnected landscapes of the foothills, forests, watersheds, and wildlife habitats, Bragg Creek embraces growth as an opportunity to invest in sustainable and adaptive strategies and sustain our fundamental values of community, safety, economy, equity, affordable living, aging in place, learning, and recreating in balance with environmental stewardship, economic vitality, and social well-being, ensuring resilience in the face of change.

By championing a holistic and regenerative approach to land use and development, Bragg Creek continues to thrive as a hub of ecological health and regional prosperity, contributing meaningfully to the sustainable future of its natural and human communities and serving as a model for other communities to emulate.

The Greater Bragg Creek Area Structure Plan is a forward-thinking and balanced approach to land use planning, development, and stewardship. It upholds the community's core values: living within ecological limits, fostering a connected and inclusive community, supporting a vibrant and innovative economy, promoting an active outdoor lifestyle, and nurturing a profound connection to nature and its surrounding landscapes. By providing clear and actionable guidance for future growth, the plan ensures that new development respects and enhances the character and identity of Bragg Creek. It seeks to balance the opportunities of growth with the responsibility to protect and sustain the unique natural and cultural assets that define the area, safeguarding the health of its ecosystems, and the well-being of its residents for generations to come.

Key features of the plan shall include:

- **Clear policies and strong guidance** on how to achieve community priorities and realize the community's vision
- **Addressing key challenges**, including housing affordability and availability, as well as infrastructure and water constraints
- **Rooted in a care for place**, recognizing the community's role as stewards of its unique environment
- **Focused on the well-being of residents**, ensuring Bragg Creek is a place where people of all ages can thrive
- **Guided by the land**, emphasizing that land management and development activities shall be guided by, and respect the limitations of, the natural landscape
- **A strong technical basis** for future decision making, supported by comprehensive studies and a Natural Asset Management Plan that captures the complexity of this unique area and provides guidance for regenerative development
- **Recognizing the ramifications of climate change** and the necessity to mitigate its impacts in the planning and development process
- **Recognizing that the subject area as small**, susceptible to natural disturbances and consequently requiring thoughtful consideration and planning
- **Recognizing that our community serves a larger area** and population which must be considered and planned for in balance with the limitations of a small community and a sensitive natural environment

## Land Use

Bragg Creek is a forest community that evolves as it grows, provides meaningful housing choices that allow for different life stages and supports the local economy by enabling workers to live locally. Future development is designed to fit within the landscape, add linkages and improve ecological function where feasible, and fulfill regional requirements in a manner compatible with community character and quality.

Key Features shall include:

- **Development of a mix of housing types** appropriate for different housing needs at different stages of life, and supporting the local workforce and varied demographic demands including employees, adult children of residents, retirees, and newcomers.
- **Appropriate density increases** scaled to available public amenities and employment opportunities
- **Integrated development** that provides a variety of uses and amenities in a footprint to optimize the use of land
- **Clustering of development** to balance housing needs with ecological functions
- **Acknowledgement of Constraints** recognizing the limitations of the landscape, including its location within a flood zone, restricted road access and potential for negatively impacting the greater Bragg Creek. These constraints limit the area available for supporting new development. A balanced approach to future development must align with the area's infrastructural capacities and environmental considerations
- **Ensuring safety and security for all** residents and visitors which includes providing egress in the event of emergency, crime prevention, and fire safe design and development
- **Design that fits area character** including conformance with design standards and guidance, respectful of the pioneer heritage of the area and the forest setting
- **A mix of complimentary and appropriate uses** in zoning while maintaining the primary residential character of residential neighbourhoods

## Environment

Bragg Creek is a place that values and sustains its natural environment and its biodiversity with its rich abundance of vegetation and wildlife. Ecological services are respected, protected and enhanced. The unique ecology of this place is understood as central to the value and attraction to the community. Economic development does not come at the expense of the ecological integrity (which itself is critical to its economic success). As the site of the headwaters of the Elbow River, the ecological services of the land are recognized as essential to the welfare of communities living downstream, from Redwood Meadows to Calgary, and are protected accordingly.

Key features of the plan shall include:

- **Emphasizing the Value of Ecological Services and Natural Assets** including watershed protection and the critical role of forests and vegetation in mitigating risks from climate change and natural hazards. These natural features also contribute significantly to enhancing the overall quality of life.
- **Regenerative Planning and Design** principles to ensure that new development delivers net ecological and social benefits, contributing positively to both the environment and community well-being.
- **Recognizing the Impact of Climate Change** including understanding and considering the vulnerabilities of the environment and community safety associated with extreme climate events

including drought, flood, fire, wind and storms, but also disease and pests. The development of emergency egress infrastructure is a community priority.

- **Environmentally Supportive Development** encouraging development that enhances and preserves the natural assets and ecological services of the land, ensuring alignment with regenerative principles and environmental resilience.
- **Protecting Natural Linkages and Wildlife Corridors** including adding or enhancing natural linkages and wildlife corridors within the planning area to support biodiversity, ecosystem connectivity, and habitat resilience.
- **Incorporating Dark Sky Principles** into development plans to minimize light pollution, protect nighttime ecosystems, and preserve the natural visibility of the night sky.

## Economy

Bragg Creek's economic future relies on a healthy natural environment. A place-based model for the economy recognizes the inextricable link between place, people, and prosperity. The economy of Bragg Creek thrives based on a diverse model of locally owned commercial enterprises that fit the individual character of the local and surrounding area, home based businesses, and tourism and residential services that encapsulate the unique value proposition of its residents. Bragg Creek will continue to be a place where artistic and recreational-based businesses can thrive along with new opportunities that align with the community's values.

Key features of the plan shall include:

- **Planning for a Sustainable Economy** integrating economic and environmental stewardship at very stage of land use planning to ensure balanced and sustainable growth.
- **Promoting Resilient Economic Activities** that are adaptable to seasonal changes, weather conditions, and fluctuating tourism trends, ensuring long-term stability and success.
- **Prioritizing Local Serving Business** including supporting a wide range of businesses that support local residents including services and trades.
- **Encouraging Eco-Conscious Visitor Engagement** prioritizing visitor activities that align with community values and prioritize environmental protection, fostering sustainable tourism.
- **Developing A Balanced Destination Economy** that remains resilient over time while addressing the needs of both the local population and visitors and that balances out and is resilient to fluctuations over seasons, days of the week, and weather conditions.
- **Supporting Low-Impact Businesses** including home-based and storefront businesses with minimal environmental impact, such as consulting, health care/well-being/holistic care, education, and arts and culture, which cater to both local and surrounding populations.

## Community Amenities and Facilities

Bragg Creek is an accessible and inclusive community that provides facilities supporting health and well-being, public gathering outdoor recreation, and varied social and artistic opportunities. Opportunities are pursued to expand programming and accommodate evolving recreational artistic, and cultural demands. Private facilities are encouraged but not at the detriment of public facilities. To ensure a variety of activities, take into account volunteer-run facilities as well as opportunities in neighbouring areas.

Key features of the plan shall include:

- **Meeting diverse and evolving needs** adapting sports and recreation facilities to meet the diverse and evolving needs of the community,

- **Maximizing use of existing facilities** including establishing joint-use agreements with neighbouring facilities to make the most of available resources
- **Promoting active community life** with a focus on improving public spaces to promote an active and engaged community life.
- **Maintaining emergency response plans** including planning for the use of public spaces in the event of disasters (e.g. floods, fires or storms) and during recovery efforts.
- **Ensuring safe access to the river** for both people and wildlife, while maintaining the berm's protective function.
- **Designing Regenerative park and public spaces** that cater to human needs, while also enhancing and preserving habitat functions.
- **Maintaining public and natural spaces** to manage the impact of visitor activity including waste and litter management.

### Mobility

Bragg Creek is an interconnected and walkable community with mobility choices for all ages and abilities. All modes of transportation are accommodated with an emphasis on safety for all and care to limit traffic impacts, including noise, on neighbourhood areas. Improvements are designed with resilience in mind and to be economically efficient. Human mobility is balanced with maintaining and improving ecological corridors and connections and through considering the environmental impact of planned improvements. Natural assets are recognized and incorporated into the planning process.

Key features of the plan shall:

- **Minimizing traffic impact** and road congestion in residential areas including enforcing strict controls on traffic speed and noise.
- **Promoting walkability and active modes of transportation**, such as cycling, running, roller skiing, and other non-motorized options.
- **Prioritizing barrier free access** for individuals with mobility challenges.
- **Balancing mobility and ecology**, ensuring improvements to the transportation system do not result in a loss of ecological function
- **Prioritizing safe mobility** throughout the community including sufficient sidewalks with proper drainage and maintenance over time.
- **Recognizing the value of well-designed and nature-based connections** that support the local visitor economy and encourage outdoor recreation.



**Appendix B: Bragg Creek Area Structure Plan Visioning Committee**

**Business Representatives**

Baruch Laskin  
Terri-Lynn Duque

**Community Services Representatives**

Ian Greenhalgh  
Lindsey Kindrat

**Environment Representatives**

Clint Docken  
Renee Delorme

**Resident Representatives**

Shannon Bailey  
Tijs Overmars