



COCHRANE SUSTAINABILITY *plan*

Think long term. Look at the whole. See the connections.



May 2009



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Part 7



Understanding the Cochrane Sustainability Plan

Letter from the Mayor

The Cochrane Sustainability Plan is our community’s shared plan for the future. The focus is on integration, and the connections that we all share. We know that our community systems — the built environment, culture, economy, governance, natural environment and social elements — are all interconnected, and that we need to think and act in ways that recognize these connections.

With this focus, we can build Cochrane in a way that is truly sustainable both now and well into the future. This plan represents an unprecedented level of community involvement in Cochrane. Nearly 500 citizens shared their hopes and dreams through our visioning process, and 75 individuals contributed hundreds of hours of time in the development of this plan. The contribution of their knowledge, skills and commitment to Cochrane has truly been inspiring. It has reaffirmed my belief that Cochrane is an incredible, dynamic community with impassioned citizens.

This plan is about creating a brighter, more sustainable future for our community while enhancing our quality of life today. I encourage every individual, household, organization and business in Cochrane to read this plan and to think about how they can contribute to our progress along the Pathways to the Future. If we work together, we will be able to build the kind community we all want, not just for today but for the years to come.

The journey continues,

Mayor Truper McBride
May 2009



Letter from the Citizens Advisory Group Tri-Chairs

It has been a great honor to serve as the Tri-Chairs of the Citizens Advisory Group for the Cochrane Sustainability Plan. We all have so many reasons to be grateful that we live in such a beautiful and caring community that is full of citizens who care deeply about this place. During the process of developing this plan, we were constantly inspired by the commitment that was demonstrated to creating a great future for Cochrane. Cochranites truly care about this community and want to see it thrive. The Cochrane Sustainability Plan is a unique opportunity for our community to work together to build the future we have identified for ourselves.

To create the future that is described in this plan, we each need to do our part — whether as a parent, a teacher, a businessperson — or any of the countless other roles we all play to contribute to making life in Cochrane something special. As a community, our commitment to share our knowledge, to cooperate and to collaborate will give us the foundation to build the Cochrane we want for ourselves.

The completion of the Cochrane Sustainability Plan is only the beginning. We now need to make this plan a tool that is continually used throughout Cochrane to make decisions, develop partnerships and act as a catalyst for developing our future. Anthropologist, Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” We are convinced that collectively we will make a difference in our community!

Stephanie Bennett
Valerie McCracken
Clara Plamondon
May 2009



A Community Plan For Our Shared Future

The Cochrane Sustainability Plan is a community plan to create shared action to build a common future. In order to realize our vision for Cochrane, we need to encourage every citizen, household, organization and institution in our community to get involved. We need to foster a Culture of Responsibility.

A Culture of Responsibility fosters opportunities for empowerment of individual citizens and the collective community to participate and interact as responsible stewards who will ensure the economic, social, ecological, and environmental sustainability of our community.

As we move towards the Vision and Pathways laid out in this plan, we need to continually increase the empowerment of the community by:

- Developing a strong and shared sense of leadership for our future
- Building robust networks and community relations throughout Cochrane
- Encouraging education and mutual learning
- Ensuring effective and respectful communication

In addition, our decision making needs to be based upon:

- Duty to community and to citizenship
- Equity in balancing all voices, goals, and interests
- Fair and legitimate conflict and dispute resolution
- Responsible and responsive action

In the coming years, if we use these ideas to build the necessary infrastructure to guide ourselves as we move along these Pathways, then we will reach our Vision and build the kind of Cochrane we want for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.



Our Approach to Sustainability

In developing the Cochrane Sustainability Plan, we used the Brundtland Commission’s definition of sustainable development as our starting point for understanding sustainability. This report defines sustainable development as:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

In our approach to sustainability, we decided to focus on three key ideas:

1. **Think long term.** This allowed us to get creative, think about big, long-term trends and help us think about how future Cochranites will be able to live here.
2. **Look at the whole.** We wanted to look at all elements of life in Cochrane — how we build our community, our economy, our culture, how we govern ourselves, our natural environment and how we connect and support one another. Understanding Cochrane this way allowed us to better understand how we relate to our region and ultimately our world.
3. **See the connections.** Things that happen in Cochrane are connected. Our culture influences our economy. How we build the community influences our natural environment. How we relate to each other influences how we make decisions. Understanding these connections will help us meet our needs as a community now and in the future.

A key component of developing the plan was to understand the multiple systems that are at work in Cochrane. In developing this plan, we looked at six interconnected community systems, which are identified below.

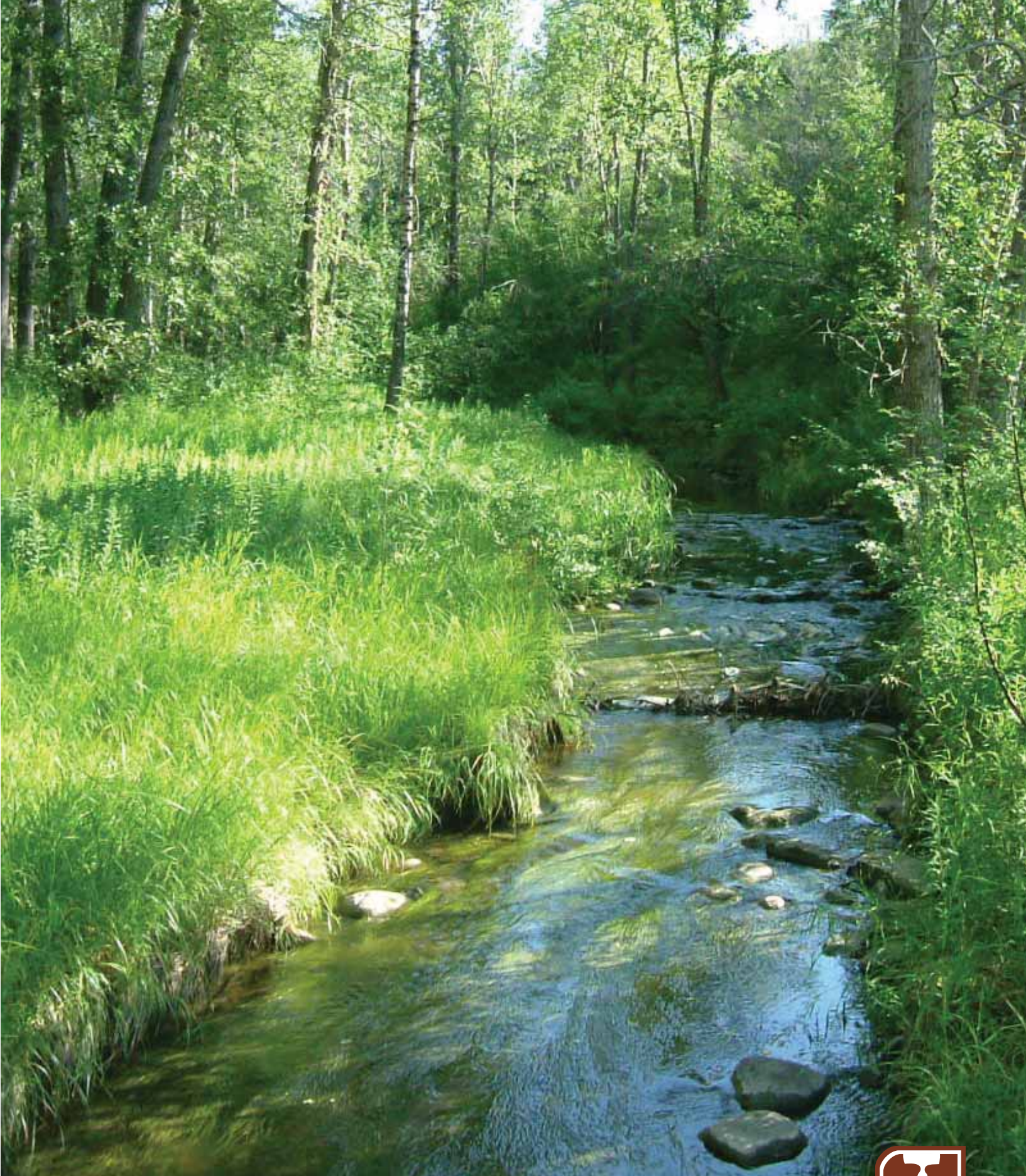


These systems represent a way of thinking about our community. The six systems are a way to “look at the whole” and “see the connections” — something that is vital if we are to create meaningful action as a community towards our desired future. As we move into the implementation of the Cochrane Sustainability Plan, we need to continually understand and consider these systems. While systems thinking is essential to consider all parts of our community, the 13 Pathways to our Future found in Part 2 of this document embody an integrated approach to action. Thinking and acting in an integrated fashion will allow us to make wiser decisions and collaborate to build the kind of Cochrane we want.

Systems Thinking:
An integrated approach to thinking about our community.



Pathways to our Future:
An integrated approach to action in our community.



Our Process

Over the course of 11 months, the Cochrane Sustainability Plan was developed. As a community plan, it was essential to establish key parameters to guide the process. These parameters were:

Create a community-led, community-owned Plan
Town of Cochrane staff and Council supported community sustainability plan development through the provision of resources. To set a long-term direction for the community, the Cochrane Sustainability Planning approach required widespread collaboration with, and implementation commitments from, a variety of participants and stakeholders.

Co-create the plan
Create widespread ownership of the CSP and its implementation through extensive and long-term community engagement.

Use a long-term lens
The Cochrane Sustainability Plan looks ahead 50 years to consider trends and issues that will affect Cochrane for at least two generations.

Commit to a clear timeline
Initial resources for the development of the CSP were committed until April 2009. Although ambitious, this deadline was maintained to motivate all participants to work diligently to complete the CSP.

Employ a systems approach
Cochrane includes social, cultural, economic, natural environment, built environment, and governance systems that are interconnected within the Town and to larger regional, national and international systems. The CSP attempts to “look at the whole” as the plan is developed and implemented.

Build on existing assets
Cochrane already has many outstanding people, organizations, initiatives, plans, and processes that encourage sustainable practices. The CSP process celebrates and engages existing organizations, networks, and activities to build on their important work.

Promote continuous improvement
The CSP recognizes the need for ongoing monitoring, reporting, and communication so we all learn from experience, share successes and set-backs, and adapt the CSP to new conditions during implementation.

After an initial methodology development phase, the CSP process began in earnest in June 2008 with the first meeting of the Citizens Advisory Group. This group of 12 citizens was tasked with being responsible for:

- Helping develop the Engagement Plan for the CSP
- Creating a long-term Vision for a sustainable Cochrane
- Approving a set of sustainability principles for the process
- Developing an implementation framework for the CSP

Visioning

From July 2008 to October 2008, citizens were asked four open-ended questions designed to discover their thoughts on what’s great about Cochrane today and what their hopes are for the future. These questions were:

1. What do you value about Cochrane?
2. What changes would you most like to see?
3. What are your hopes and dreams for Cochrane in the next 50 years?
4. How can you help make this happen?

Over the course of four months, 489 citizens and visitors responded to these questions. Using a community-based approach, Cochranites were able to respond to the questions at a variety of events and meetings throughout Cochrane. Respondents were also able to answer the questions on the Cochrane Sustainability Plan website. The result of this process is a vision for Cochrane’s future, which can be found in Part 2.



Action Groups

The next phase of work in the development of the Cochrane Sustainability Plan was the Action Group process. This phase was focused on providing clarity for action towards the vision for the community. Over an intensive six-month process, 64 individuals contributed over 700 hours of their time to the development of the CSP.

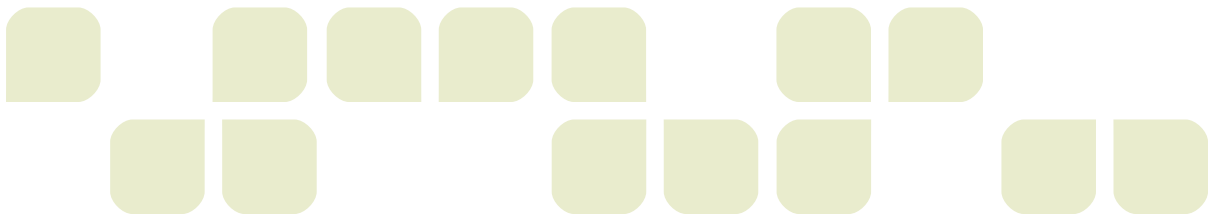
There were six Action Groups that were focused on the community systems of Cochrane. These were:

- Built Environment Action Group
- Culture Action Group
- Economic Action Group
- Governance Action Group
- Natural Environment Action Group
- Social Action Group

Key elements of these groups' work included:

- **Identifying existing assets** – things that are already working in the community
- **Reviewing key trends** – understanding historical forces that have shaped Cochrane
- **Developing Descriptions of Success** – a portrayal of what our community systems will look like if we meet our vision for the future
- **Developing Descriptions of Current Reality** – a portrayal of where we are starting from today
- **Community targets** – creating specific targets that the community can collaborate on over a period of 10 to 50 years
- **Identifying actions** – looking at ways to begin action towards the desired future for Cochrane

The work of the Action Groups was integrated into the Pathways for the Future that are found in Part 2. These represent an integrated approach to the future and recognize the connections between the community systems that have been identified.



Implementation Framework

As part of the work of the Citizens Advisory Group, a framework for implementation has been developed to enable the implementation of the Cochrane Sustainability Plan. Especially in the first year, this framework will be a continuous work in progress as the community evaluates the necessary resources and steps to create individual and collaborative action on the CSP. Much like the development of the plan, a set of key parameters has been established for the implementation of the framework. These parameters are:

Be inclusive, not exclusive
Ultimately, we want the entire Cochrane community to do their part towards the CSP. In creating our structures and action plans, we need to provide multiple opportunities to be engaged with the CSP.

Build on existing assets
We already have a lot of great things happening in Cochrane right now. Let's find a way to build on these to move our community forward.

Continuously learn, improve and adjust
In order to be as effective as possible, we need to take a learning approach to the implementation of the CSP. The best learning comes from experience, so we will find ways to share this learning with one another, improve along the way and adjust course as needed to get where we want to go.

Build positive relationships
If we want to get towards our vision, we have to work together as a community. We will continually focus on building relationships so we can understand each other and create effective action.

As the details of the implementation framework are developed and actioned, this information will be made available to the community.

Grow the capacity of the community
In implementing the CSP, we need to consistently look for ways to increase our ability to solve the challenges we face.

Empower the community and build community ownership
In order to build a culture of responsibility, the entire community must be empowered to act and take ownership of the Plan. We need to trust our fellow Cochranites to do their part in creating a more sustainable future for our community.

Employ a systems approach
Cochrane includes social, cultural, economic, natural environment, built environment, and governance systems that are interconnected within the community and to larger regional, national and international systems. We will "look at the whole" as we implement the CSP.





Contributors

The development of the Cochrane Sustainability Plan would not have been possible without the dedication, enthusiasm and contributions of the 75 citizens of Cochrane that were involved in the process. These individuals demonstrated true leadership through their involvement in the process.

Citizens Advisory Group

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| • Stephanie Bennett | • Richard Foy | • Valerie McCracken |
| • Jim Cullen | • Tim Giese | • Eric Peach |
| • Gordon Davies | • Ken Hutchinson | • Clara Plamondon |
| • Lydia Graham | • Truper McBride | |

Built Environment Action Group

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| • Craig Drake | • Randy Mabbott | • Maihaa Rayne |
| • Richard Geleta | • Tara McFadden | • Pat Robertson |
| • Wally Hume | • Clint Munkholm | • Terry Robertson |
| • Bruce Kendall | • Matthew Parks | • Maureen Wills |
| • Kelly Learned | • Kim Radloff | • Dennis Wren |

Culture Action Group

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| • Ed Allen | • Gordon Davies | • Sandy Johnson |
| • Heidi Bennett | • Ivan Davies | • Judy Robbins |
| • John Buckley | • Travis Eklund | • Edith Wearmouth |
| • Nicole Byl | • Don Hepburn | • Carole Van Kleek |
| • Paul Daniels | • Murray Mitchell | |

Economic Action Group

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| • Maggie Armstrong | • Kelsey Envik | • Annette McLeod |
| • Brenda Beck-Edwards | • Richard Foy | • Paige Milner |
| • Joann Churchill | • Rob Kalinovich | • Mark Pafarath |

Governance Action Group

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| • Ken Bech | • Mireille Hamel | • Piney Stahl |
| • Laurie Drukier | • Terry McManus | • Judy Stewart |
| • Lisa Fox | • Brenda Romanchuk | • Ross Watson |

Natural Environment Action Group

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| • Erin Butters | • Sarah Johnson | • Gary Wagner |
| • Miles Chester | • Starr Kolb | • Jay Wieliczko |
| • Rick Deans | • Andrew Stiles | • Gloria Wilkinson |
| • Kathryn Hull | | |

Social Action Group

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| • Kent Andersson | • Kim Krawec | • Laurel Ross |
| • Dot Gillis | • Nadine Maillot | • Brenda Sine |
| • Susan Flowers | | |



Part 2



Our Vision and Pathways to the Future

Our Cochrane. Our Future.

Innovative, bold and dynamic, Cochrane is a community that creates its destiny by building on our proud heritage. We are people of vision in environmental stewardship and economic vitality that was passed down to us through our strong and rich western Canadian foundation. At the heart of Cochrane we value our small-town atmosphere, distinctive big hills, escarpments, waterways and unique opportunities. We are a community forged by relationships supportive of our common desire to live long, fulfilling lives.

As pioneers of sustainability, we build on the legacy of our pioneering past.

We honour our heritage.

We celebrate our strong relationships.

We respect the land.



How Can You Use This Plan?

Collectively, the Pathways described below provide a shared direction for the community to move along in an integrated and collaborative way. Ultimately, these will help to realize the vision that has been created for the future of Cochrane.

As a community plan, the Cochrane Sustainability Plan can be used in a wide variety of ways. This could include:

- An organization using the Cochrane Sustainability Plan as a guide for their strategic planning
- A local business using the Cochrane Sustainability Plan to make decisions on their purchasing or delivery of goods and services
- A school developing student programs that align with the direction of the Cochrane Sustainability Plan
- A household making decisions that contribute to the Cochrane Sustainability Plan, such as purchasing a rain barrel for their yard

Those are just a few examples of how the Cochrane Sustainability Plan can become a plan that helps us build the future we want for ourselves. Cochraneites are creative people and over the coming years we will discover new and exciting ways to use this plan and make it a living part of our community.

13 Pathways to the Future...

As described in Part 1, the Pathways for the Future are an integrated approach to action in Cochrane. Each Pathway features the following elements:

- **A description of success** – a portrayal of what Cochrane will look like in 50 years if we successfully work towards this Pathway.
- **A description of the current reality** – providing an understanding of our starting point today, including existing initiatives that are already underway.
- **Targets** – specific areas for the community to collaboratively work towards over a period of 10 to 50 years.

We Build a Culture of Responsibility

1. **We are a socially responsible and empowered community.**

We are Responsible Citizens of the Planet

2. **We treat water as a precious resource.**
3. **We use energy responsibly and innovatively.**
4. **We contribute to the solution on climate change.**

We Live Locally

5. **We consume the bounty of our local economy.**
6. **Our local economy is healthy and diverse.**
7. **Everyone has an opportunity to pursue their potential in Cochrane.**
8. **We are a caring community that lives and celebrates together.**

Cochrane is a Complete Community

9. **Everyone has a roof over their head.**
10. **There's enough room for everything a community should have.**
11. **Wherever you are in Cochrane, you're close and connected.**
12. **There are diverse options for getting around.**
13. **We build Cochrane on the strengths of our natural and cultural heritage.**



We build a culture of responsibility

1. We are a socially responsible and empowered community.

Our Description of Success

In 2059...

Cochrane is a place with residents who care, engage and interact with one another to support a common sense of community. Cochrane is built on shared values that include ensuring everyone has access to basic human needs, and support for emotional, spiritual, mental and physical health.

Decision makers understand that choices are being made not just for today’s community, but for the place it will become 50 years from now. Decision makers are open-minded and assume that others have pieces of the answers. People understand and participate because they are empowered by how their values and input have been reflected in decisions over time.

Cochranites are inspired and motivated to help initiate positive, progressive change. At every level of the community, there is an understanding and ownership around what a culture of responsibility means and how it inspires a better community. Networks and relationships are celebrated for acts as simple as smiling at someone on the street or as complex as several organizations connecting and working together toward a goal.

Residents are committed to preserving the best of our community and social connections, and sustaining them for generations to come.



Our Current Reality

Voter turn out

The most recent municipal election in 2007 resulted in a 39.21 per cent voter turn out. In 2004, the voter turn out was 38.3 per cent, and in 2001 voter turn out was 39 per cent. While this is not enough information to establish a long-term trend, it does suggest the need to encourage more widespread participation in our municipal elections.

Strong volunteer community

Sixty-six per cent of respondents to the 2005 Cochrane Community Survey stated that they volunteer. The average number of volunteer hours per month ranges from eight to 10. There are approximately 120 groups and organizations in the Cochrane area involving volunteers.

Between July 10, 2008 and April 9, 2009, there have been 739 recorded meeting hours dedicated by volunteers to the CSP project. This does not include the more than 400 residents who took time to complete the visioning questions, or the amount of staff time provided by employers to support the project. The estimated total meeting hours contributed by Town staff and volunteers up to April 9, 2009 is 1,415 hours.

Food bank needs

Between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008, food hamper distribution decreased compared to the record high of 415 hampers in 2005/2006. As the population grows and diversifies, it is expected that reliance on the food bank program will fluctuate to reflect the economic and social situation of the time.

Full FCSS and other social support programs

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) offers social programs for residents that vary from year to year, but attendance is always consistently high.

Targets

Voter turnout:

- By 2013, 50% of eligible voters will vote in all elections.
- By 2020, 65% of eligible voters will vote in all elections.
- By 2030, 80% of eligible voters will vote in all elections.

By 2019, increase the number of citizens and organizations who declare action towards the Cochrane Sustainability Plan by 500% from 2009.

By 2029, increase volunteer hours and charitable donations by 20%.



We are Responsible Citizens of the Planet

2. We treat water as a precious resource.

Our Description of Success

In 2059....

The Bow River is vibrant and vital to our existence, and that of future generations. Cochranites are consuming and using water in a responsible and sustainable manner. We are a community that utilizes innovation to maximize reuse and to enhance system efficiency. We are good stewards of the watershed we live in – a community coordinating efforts and sharing responsibility. Water is an integral part of who we are, and is part of our everyday life and identity. Without our water bodies, as they are now situated, Cochrane wouldn't be Cochrane. As a community, we appreciate this as one of the main connections to our heritage.

Our community has been designed and built or redeveloped to reflect the priority we place on treating water as a precious resource. Water is reused wherever possible, and it is not wasted. Citizens have taken the initiative to find ways to use water responsibly, through landscaping practices and with the appropriate use of water in the home. Strategies include grey water use, the installation of water-efficient appliances, and the use of new water-saving technologies that have emerged since this report was prepared.

Our children can play in the river.

Our Current Reality

Across the province of Alberta, and throughout Canada and North America, the focus on water as a precious and finite resource has become prominent. That is why the Cochrane Sustainability Plan includes water as one of the key natural resources to be addressed.

Watershed management planning initiatives

The Town of Cochrane is involved in watershed planning at a sub-regional level with the Three Creeks Watershed Partnership. In 2009 to 2011, three new watershed management plans are expected to be developed from a grass roots level of engagement. In 2007, the Bow River Basin Council (BRBC) completed the *Bow Basin Watershed Management Plan, Phase 1: Water Quality Objectives and Indicators*. The BRBC is now working on implementation with various stakeholders, including the Town of Cochrane. Watershed planning continues under the provincial Water for Life Strategy.

Water infrastructure system and conservation initiatives

The Town of Cochrane is participating in the Calgary Regional Partnership regional water and wastewater servicing study. Results of that study are expected in late 2009. In 2009, Cochrane's water license will have enough capacity to service between 30,000 and 35,000 residents with the implementation of conservation initiatives. Currently, Cochrane treats its

own water, which means we have control over the quality and allocated quantity. A new technology to save water has been installed at the Town's water plant – it will greatly reduce waste discharge volumes and maximize water allocation.

Cochrane is a fully metered community. It has been proven that metered homes consume less water than un-metered homes. This is one of the most important initiatives in a successful water conservation program. Adding to the incentives to conserve water is the three-tier water rate system, which means the more you use the more you pay. The implementation of water conservation initiatives in Cochrane has grown to include the toilet rebate program, the use of water conservation officers (Cochrane is currently the only community in Alberta with this service), time of day watering restrictions, and naturescape requirements for commercial and industrial landscaping.

The success achieved by Cochrane's water conservation initiatives is apparent. In December 2004, the community's per capita water use was 204 litres/person/day. By December of 2008, this had fallen to 150 litres/person/day – an overall residential reduction of 27 per cent.

Targets

By 2029, per capita water use in Cochrane has decreased by 15% from 2008 levels.



We are Responsible Citizens of the Planet

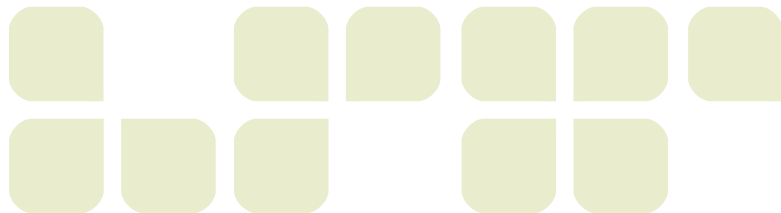
3. We use energy responsibly and innovatively.

Our Description of Success

In 2059...

Alternative energy sources such as wind and solar power are widely used, both publicly and privately throughout the community.

Energy conservation is a key focus throughout Cochrane – from the appliances and lights residents choose to use to the way neighborhoods are designed. Alternative energy systems supplement traditional energy and are a standard approach to building design. The design of buildings, their construction and operation is characterized by efficiency, durability and flexibility for changing and long-term uses. Energy infrastructure is sufficiently funded to enable these alternative systems to continually evolve and improve upon existing systems.



Our Current Reality

This Pathway focuses on shifting the energy source away from traditional sources for our built environment (such as coal and gas) toward alternative, more renewable energy sources (such as solar, geothermal and wind power). This Pathway also looks at ways we can develop efficiencies in our current energy systems.

Solar energy

By 2009, several institutional buildings had installed photovoltaic panels, including Cochrane High School and the Big Hill Leisure Pool.

Alternative energy sources and development initiatives

All Town of Cochrane facilities have undergone energy audits and are now in the process of implementing recommendations to increase energy savings. Twenty per cent of the energy used by Town buildings is purchased as green power. The Town already has one hybrid vehicle in the fleet and will continue to consider green fleet approaches. Many Town office lighting systems have been equipped with motion sensors to save energy, and LED lights are being used in more applications.

Some residents have inquired about small residential wind turbines and geothermal systems, indicating a growing interest in renewable energy technologies. The Town will develop standards for such projects.

Some developers in Cochrane are encouraging builders to use the BuiltGreen Alberta standards. Compared to traditional construction practices, these standards help increase the energy efficiency of new homes.

Targets

By 2029, 30% of Cochrane's energy derives from low-impact renewable sources.

By 2029, per capita energy use in Cochrane has decreased by 30% from 2009 levels.



We are Responsible Citizens of the Planet

4. We contribute to the solution on climate change.

Our Description of Success

By 2059...

Cochranites are driving less because of the safe, efficient and aesthetically pleasing network of bike and pedestrian pathways throughout the community. The public transportation system provides user-friendly service to all areas in the town and also connects to the region. Citizens have choice in how they get around with an accessible, all-season transportation system that provides practical options.

Businesses are actively reducing their environmental pollution levels.

Volunteers continue to be supported in their efforts to protect and improve the natural environment through habitat enhancement projects and community organizations such as Branches and Banks.



Our Current Reality

In the context of environmental policy, climate change usually refers to changes in modern climate. Pathways 3 and 4 are connected in that energy efficiency can be one way to help mitigate climate change in the future. This Pathway focuses on other human influences that affect climate change – such as transportation and solid waste – as well as actions that help mitigate climate change through natural processes, like increasing the number of trees and shrubs planted in the community.

Transportation and transit

Currently, Cochrane does not have a local transit system to service the entire town. The design of Cochrane’s neighbourhoods has created a car-dependant community. Services and day-to-day needs are not in walking or cycling distance for each neighbourhood. While Cochrane does enjoy a beautiful pathway system during the summer months, it is not accessible year round.

Many Cochranites work in Calgary and use vehicles for their daily commute. A private commuter bus service transports Cochranites to and from Calgary every day for work, but this option is used by only a small number of the more than 50 per cent of the working population who commute out-of-town.

Solid waste

The Recycling Depot in Cochrane is well used by residents, especially since the two-bag garbage limit was initiated in 2005. Recycling commodity volumes are increasing significantly each year, but the facility is already close to capacity. The Town will have to examine alternatives as the community grows. The cost of residential trash collection will continue to increase as transportation and landfill costs grow.

Carbon capturing with nature

Branches and Banks is a local volunteer organization doing its part to help mitigate the global issue of climate change by planting trees around Cochrane on a yearly basis. Over a 10-year period, volunteers have planted more than 30,000 trees. Other volunteer projects that do their part to reduce Cochrane’s impact on climate change and enhance our natural environment include the Big Hill Creek bank stabilization project and the Millennium Creek enhancement project.

Targets

By 2029, community greenhouse gas emissions are decreased by 30% from 2009 levels.



5. We consume the bounty of our local economy.

Our Description of Success

In 2059...

Our local economy grew from ranching roots, and residents continue to support this vibrant, local industry through their respect for the land. Cochranites value the land and where our food comes from, and we preserve these important natural resources. A higher percentage of local food production and local food consumption results in a more secure food supply.

Commercial and industrial buildings in Cochrane are strategically located on major transportation corridors for high visibility and easy access. New and expanding businesses can be established quickly, and they don't face roadblocks in terms of time or process. Receptiveness to new businesses is high. A culture of support and facilitation exists in Cochrane due to our reputation as being "open for business." This focus is balanced with a commitment to responsible business. There is a "shop local" philosophy throughout the community, and locally produced products and services are widely available.

Opportunities for work, play and a high quality of life are provided for all.



Our Current Reality

The local Farmer's Market organized by the Cochrane Environmental Action Committee runs from June to September each year at the Cochrane Ranch.

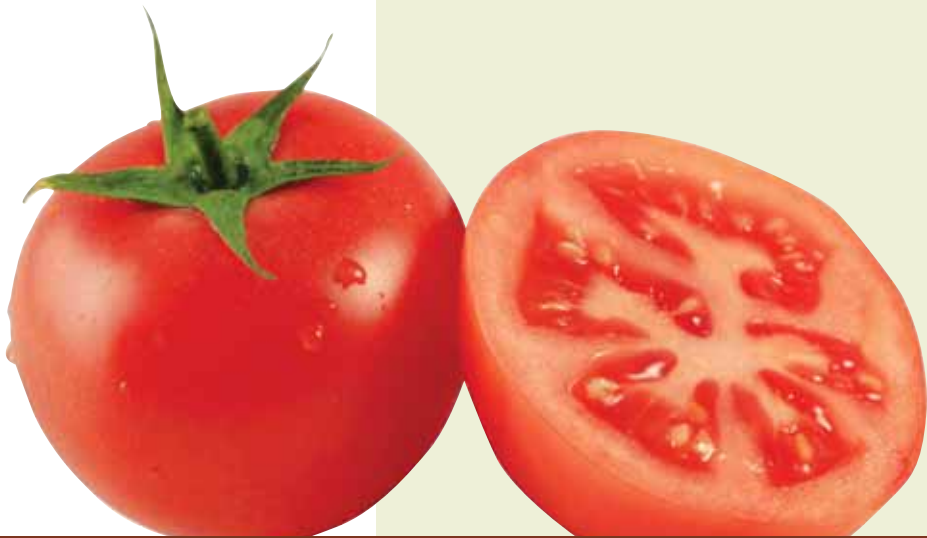
While many residents are employed outside of Cochrane, the number of home-based businesses and commuters coming to Cochrane continues to increase. Local businesses attract customers from the area, including the RanchoHouse multi-use facility, the many unique downtown retailers, and various locally owned companies and ranches.

According to some residents, there is a limited choice in terms of retail services – but others believe most retail needs can be met in Cochrane. The Town encourages residents to shop locally, and sets an example by using local goods and services whenever feasible.

Targets

By 2029, increase local food consumption by 50%.

By 2029, increase consumption of local goods & services by 50%.



6. Our local economy is healthy and diverse.

Our Description of Success

In 2059...

All business sectors desired by the town are thriving. They include health services, green (environmentally friendly) industry, technology research and development firms, a training center focused on the arts, and a major educational institution. A diversity of land uses are provided to accommodate these sectors, and to ensure Cochrane is a self-sustaining, complete community.

Arts, cultural and heritage opportunities contribute to the local economy. Tourism is thriving thanks to our focus on the arts and western heritage. Diverse personal and professional opportunities exist to meet the creative needs that exist across and between generations.

The variety of housing options available in Cochrane supports a strong labor force, and this in turn supports existing and new businesses in Cochrane. The housing options available enable people of all income levels to live in Cochrane and contribute to the local labour force.

Ranching and agriculture continue to be recognized as important to our future. Working landscapes are located in close proximity to the Town.

Our healthy economy is adaptable and resilient. The choices we make contribute to a sustainable future for our community.



Our Current Reality

Economic diversity

According to the 2005 Cochrane Economic Base Analysis, the primary industries that are driving Cochrane’s economy consist of 36 companies with 10 or more employees. Several prominent technology companies are located in Cochrane. The Spray Lakes Sawmills is a large employer in the town. A new 24-hour urgent care centre is under construction and will provide much-needed emergency care for the region.

Our land use, as outlined in Pathway 10, supports a healthy and growing economy while preserving our natural environment.

Services to support the local economy

For a community of this size, Cochrane is fortunate to have a diversity of services available, ranging from physicians and social supports to fitness centres. Since Cochrane has a large number of young families within a thriving economy, the availability of childcare options is a key factor. Access to these services is improving.

Green businesses

Currently there are few “green” businesses in the community – businesses that attempt to reduce the environmental impact of economic practices, and which try to ensure that our communities are healthy, pleasant places to live. A growing number of local companies are making adjustments to emphasize environmentally friendly choices in terms of their products, the way they conduct purchasing and their day-to-day operations.

Targets

By 2029, the number of businesses in Cochrane across all sectors increases by 50%.



7. Everyone has an opportunity to pursue their potential in Cochrane.

Our Description of Success

In 2059...

Citizens participate within the community at the individual and group level because they are empowered through a strong and shared sense of leadership, a robust network of relationships, and through education and mutual learning opportunities.

As a community, Cochrane provides numerous opportunities for lifelong learning. Cochrane values the importance of academic and technical success, and offers access to a variety of learning opportunities and education choices within the community. Educators are attracted to living and working in Cochrane, and citizens choose to live in Cochrane in part because of the educational choices.

Access, whether physical or economic, is not a barrier to enjoying creative expression or appreciation of the arts in Cochrane. A wide range of affordable leisure activities is available. Gathering spaces exist to meet all needs, such as the Arts Centre and Seniors Centre incorporated within a community centre to encourage intergenerational interaction.

Our diverse local economy provides tremendous opportunities for residents to find meaningful work within the community. The economy of Cochrane is strongly connected to the range of learning opportunities in the community. It benefits from a locally trained workforce and educational programs that are provided within the work world.

People feel connected through a sense of pride and belonging, and are inspired to pursue their potential.



Our Current Reality

Arts

Cochrane is fortunate to have a thriving arts community that supports music, visual arts, dance and theatre. Cochrane is home to internationally recognized writers and sculptors and has several galleries and craft stores that support local artists.

Programs, supports and events

Social programs are available to help people develop their potential and skills. The youth leadership programs – through organizations such as the schools and the Boys and Girls Club – nurture our future leaders. Seniors’ programs are available and varied throughout the community. Our volunteer base is second-to-none, and our local events and celebrations foster the community spirit and small-town feel our citizens value.

Recreation

Recreational and sports opportunities are available year-round, ranging from soccer, hockey and swimming to running and triathlon clubs, to name only a few. Subsidies exist for recreational activities so everyone has access. By virtue of Cochrane’s location, residents and visitors can pursue outdoor activities like biking, walking and bird watching while enjoying mountain vistas and the community’s natural beauty.

Community meeting places

While several community meeting places exist throughout Cochrane, we’ve grown as a community in both size and expectations. Currently, many volunteer and non-profit groups have a difficult time finding affordable and accessible meeting spaces.

Learning

Educational opportunities for post-secondary studies or trade education are not extensive in Cochrane.

There are several opportunities for youth to participate in community organizations in Cochrane.

The library is an important and affordable community resource.

Cochrane residents are comfortable using technology to learn – in 2007, 81 per cent of local households used the Internet.

Targets

By 2029, there is an increase in the number of multi-use facilities in Cochrane.

By 2029, the number of businesses in Cochrane across all sectors increases by 50%.¹

¹ Also a Target identified in the “Our economy is healthy and diverse” Pathway



8. We are a caring community that lives and celebrates together.

Our Description of Success

In 2059...

Cochrane’s unique identity and small-town feel is a source of pride for its residents. The town is rooted in its commitment to the importance of its natural beauty, western heritage, cultural events and community traditions. The people of Cochrane, both past and present, are integral to its success as a strong, sustainable and distinct community.

Cochrane’s exceptional urban and architectural design allows for a high quality of life and living space for a diverse population. Residents live, work and play in relatively compact, mixed-use neighborhoods that reflect Cochrane’s character. These neighborhoods are close to appropriate green spaces, transit, trails, amenities and services, and offer access to community spaces that encourage personal interaction and shared activities.

Cochranites are passionate about the vibrant, energetic and creative arts and culture that exist within their community. Regular heritage celebrations attract visitors and residents alike. Recognition of the importance of the arts – and the role it plays in connecting us – helps sustain a strong sense of community. Access, whether physical or economic, is not a barrier to creative expression or appreciation of the arts.

In Cochrane, neighbors know one another, and all ages of residents interact together. Cochrane is a dynamic, inclusive community with a sense of pride and belonging. The community embraces change and welcomes challenges as opportunities. Citizens are empowered to participate and contribute to their community. A culture of responsibility encourages more participation and accountability in Cochrane. People celebrate and appreciate their existing networks while encouraging new ones. Values are important and form the base of our connections and community relationships.

Cochranites appreciate their community’s past, its natural beauty, the opportunity to know their neighbors, and the privilege of feeling safe in their small community.

We celebrate our strong relationships.

Our Current Reality

Cochrane is host to several unique community events that regularly draw residents together. Footstock, the Labour Day Weekend Rodeo, Cochrane Outhouse Races, Canada Day festivities, Art Walk West, Family and Children’s Festival, Soap Box Derby and the Mutt Strut are a few of the regular activities that connect us.

There are several community associations throughout Cochrane, but not every community is represented as yet.

Cochrane residents are extremely passionate about their town. A strong sense of community has been maintained over time and the vast majority of residents enjoy living in Cochrane. In a 2009 survey 98 per cent of Cochrane residents say their quality of life is good or very good.

Through the visioning process for the Cochrane Sustainability Plan, it became clear that our small-town feel was strongly valued by Cochrane residents. However, there is concern that rapid growth has led to a lack of cohesion among existing and new communities within Cochrane.

Targets

By 2019, every community is represented by a community association.

By 2029, there is a 20% increase in attendance at all Cochrane events and celebrations.



Cochrane is a Complete Community

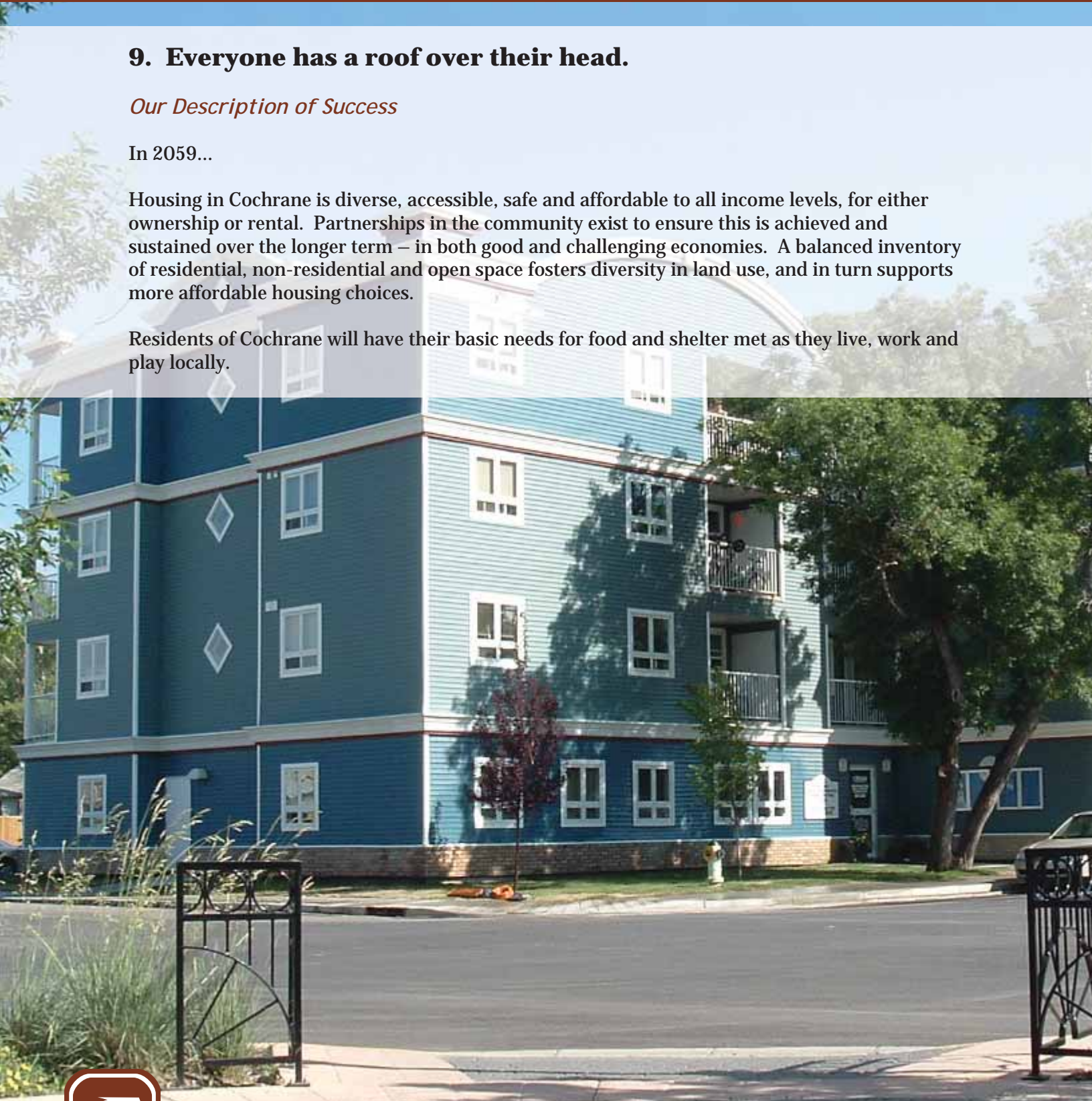
9. Everyone has a roof over their head.

Our Description of Success

In 2059...

Housing in Cochrane is diverse, accessible, safe and affordable to all income levels, for either ownership or rental. Partnerships in the community exist to ensure this is achieved and sustained over the longer term – in both good and challenging economies. A balanced inventory of residential, non-residential and open space fosters diversity in land use, and in turn supports more affordable housing choices.

Residents of Cochrane will have their basic needs for food and shelter met as they live, work and play locally.



Our Current Reality

Cochrane is considered an affluent community compared to the Alberta average of median incomes for all household types (Federal Census, 2006). Despite high median incomes, there continue to be a number of lower income households in Cochrane. Demographically, there has been a slight increase in the percentage of seniors who are residents, but Cochrane still maintains a higher percentage of children and youth compared with the provincial average (Federal Census, 2006).

According to the *2009 Cochrane Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update*, entry-level housing (the lowest priced 25 per cent of the housing stock in Cochrane) is affordable to households earning between \$51,000 and \$84,000 annually. Households earning less than \$50,000 annually would find it extremely difficult to become first-time homebuyers in Cochrane. While purchasing a home is difficult for lower income families, renting often isn't a viable alternative. Between 2000 and 2007, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) rental market data showed that average rents for a one-bedroom unit increased by 22.5 per cent, and average rents for a three-bedroom unit increased by more than 30 per cent. These figures do not bode well for affordable rentals in Cochrane.

There is some good news. The Cochrane Society for Housing Options has been hard at work ensuring there are options for those in need of housing assistance. There are currently 25 near-market rental units in Cochrane, with several more scheduled to become available later in 2009 and 2010. Also, as new communities in Cochrane are being approved and built, the requirement by the Town for higher density neighborhoods means that more than just single-family homes must be provided in each community. Townhouse, apartment style, duplex and mixed-use housing will be incorporated, which translates into more options for first-time homebuyers. With these items coming into play, the *2009 Cochrane Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update* reports that housing affordability appears to be improving overall, though not for renters.

Target

By 2029, there is a variety of tenure and housing types on the market (rental, own, rent-to-own, attainable housing).



Cochrane is a Complete Community

10. There’s enough room for everything a community should have.

Our Description of Success

In 2059...

Cochrane maintains an adequate supply of planned land to accommodate future growth, including a balanced inventory of residential, non-residential and natural open space. A complete community is emerging in that Cochrane has local food production, there are a diversity of educational and career choices available, transit options are accessible and efficient, and land use is balanced.

The open space and natural systems have been enhanced to maintain a healthy ecosystem. Residents enjoy an open space and pathway system that is accessible and safe.

Our Current Reality

Land in Cochrane is expensive and underutilized. There is a clear imbalance between the amount of land available for residential and non-residential purposes – the end result is that the amount of land available for industrial use is limited. The Town, business owners, residents and developers recognize the imbalance of land use within Cochrane’s boundaries. In 2008, the percentages of land use were: 8.2 per cent commercial, 11.8 per cent industrial, 23.4 per cent residential, 37.09 per cent urban reserve and 19.6 per cent public service (roads, parks, utility corridors, etc.).

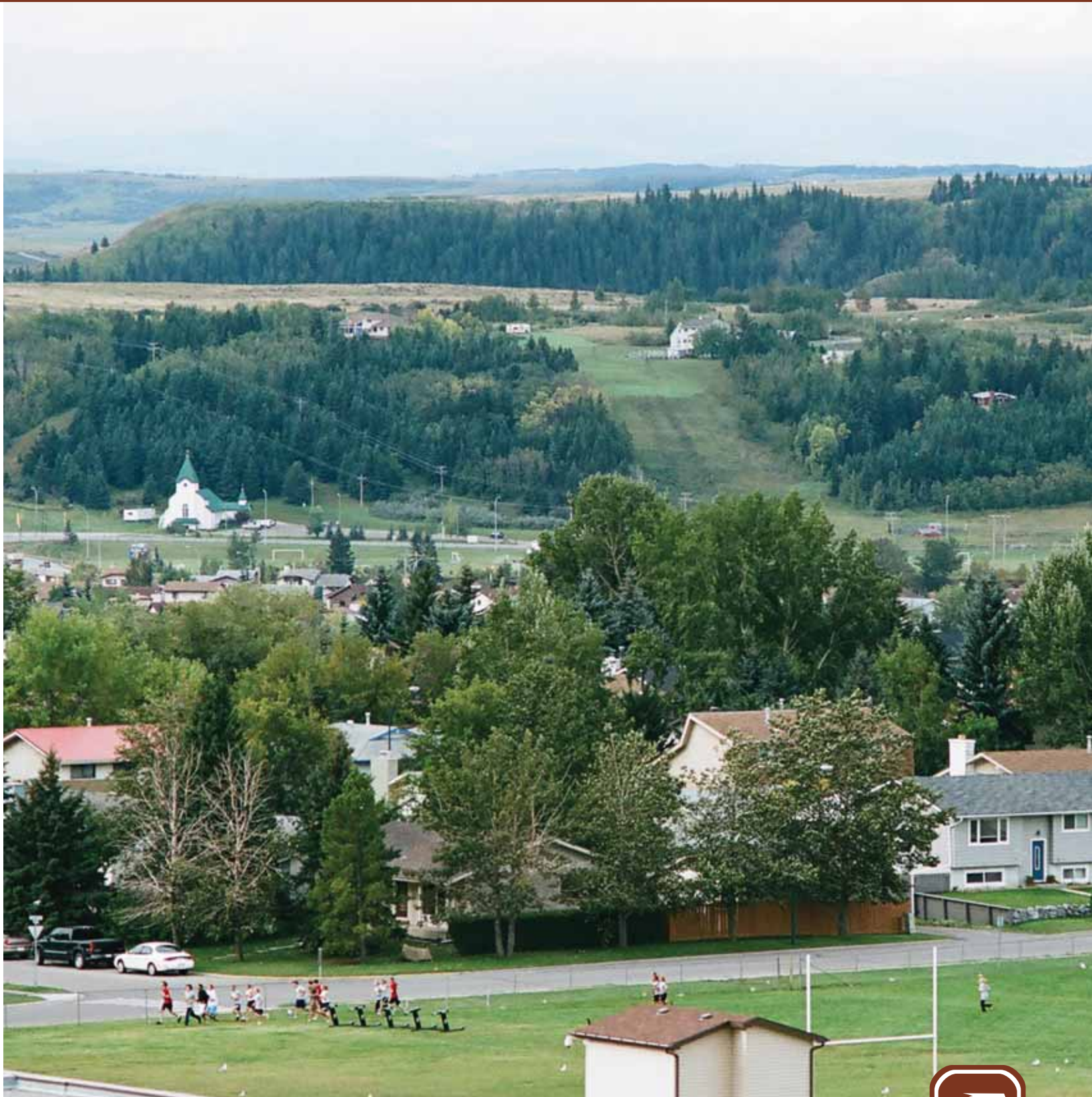
The needs of a community change over time. These needs include infrastructure, such as water, roads, transportation and pedestrian movement; various built needs, including housing, retail and industry; and ecological infrastructure, including wildlife corridors, wetlands, watersheds, habitat

areas and open space. Currently, there are provincial and regional land use plans being developed to help guide communities toward adequate planning for growth over the long term.

As well, the Town of Cochrane is working on a long-term growth strategy (to be completed in 2009) that will create the potential to develop into a more complete community over time, and which will utilize our land base to its highest potential.

Target

By 2039, municipal tax revenues are 60% residential/40% non-residential with 100% environmentally sensitive areas protected.



Cochrane is a Complete Community

11. Wherever you are in Cochrane, you're close and connected.

Our Description of Success

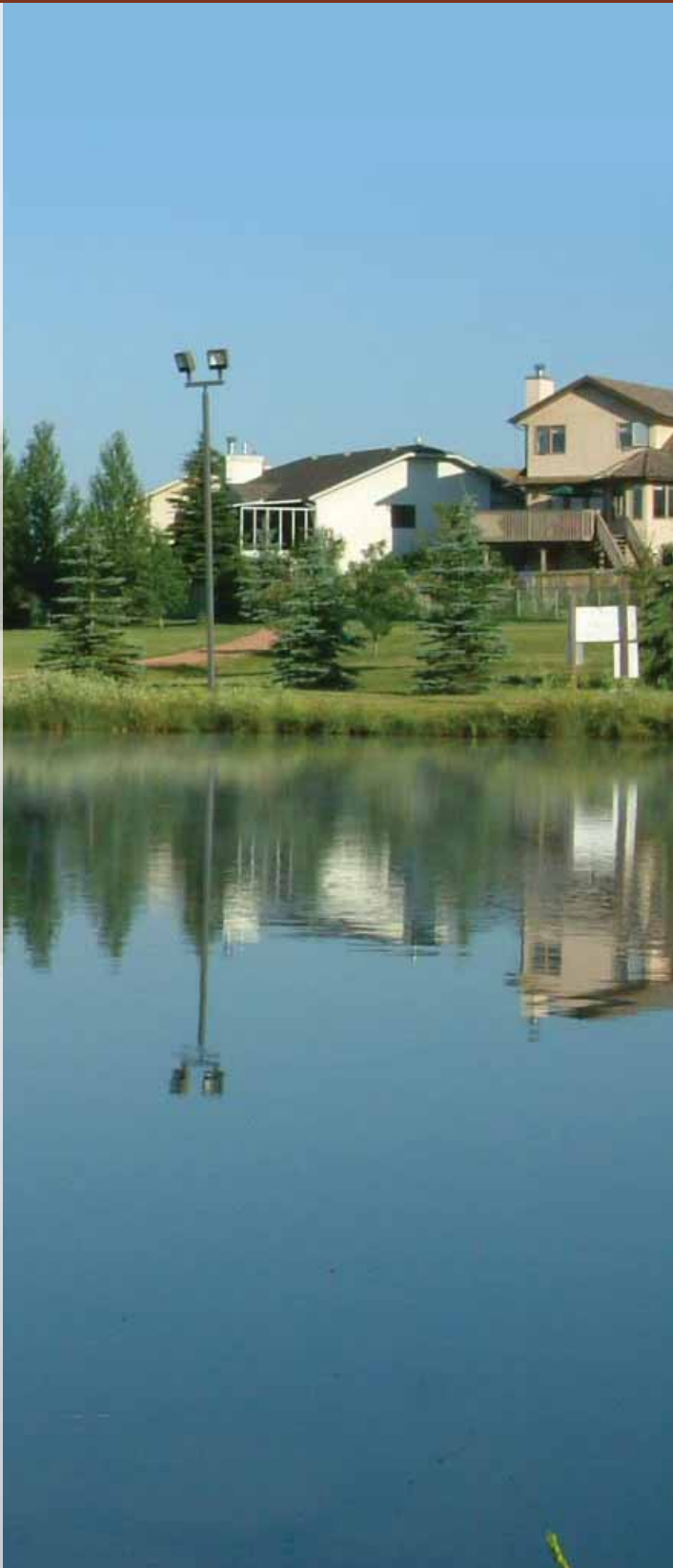
In 2059...

Residents live, work and play in relatively compact, mixed-use neighborhoods that reflect Cochrane's character and which are close to appropriate green spaces, transit, trails, amenities and services.

The pathway system has been designed and improved to be multi-use and safe. While not every pathway is maintained for all-season use, each neighborhood has at least one all-season pathway connecting it to the rest of the community and to the region.

Throughout Cochrane, the natural beauty of the landscape brings people together. Community spaces (inside and outside) encourage personal interaction and shared activities. A central community space exists to meet the multiple needs of our community, accommodating families, youth, singles, professionals, young adults, seniors, people with disabilities and special needs, minority groups and Aboriginals.

Neighbors know one another, and all ages of residents are involved and interacting with one another.



Our Current Reality

This Pathway looks at how the design of physical infrastructure affects connectivity within Cochrane. It is closely related to Pathway 12, which reflects ways people move both within and outside the connected community. The physical topography of Cochrane is an asset in terms of aesthetics – it is valued by current residents and attracts new residents to the community. However, the “lay of the land” does pose some challenges in terms of connectivity and efforts to achieve compact development. Challenges to recognize include the Bow River, the big hills and escarpments, highways 22 and 1A, the railway tracks and the valley. The more compact and mixed-use neighborhoods are, the easier it is to connect them despite the challenges.

New communities being developed are now required to develop to a minimum of eight to 10 units per gross developable acre. This means there will be more housing types and higher densities in neighborhoods, ensuring people are closer and more connected to where they want to go.

There are some areas of Cochrane that don't have great connectivity, be it pathways or road networks. The Town is working on ways to improve these gaps over time. Various members of the CSP Action Groups have highlighted that there are limited community meeting places in Cochrane. This is something that citizens feel is missing – and they have expressed the desire for a space to foster connectivity between citizens.

Targets

By 2059, density on the 2009 existing footprint of Cochrane has increased by 25%.

By 2029, 50% of the population of Cochrane are within 400m and/or 5 minute walk of a transit stop.

By 2029, 100% of the community is within 400m of some form of public open space.



Cochrane is a Complete Community

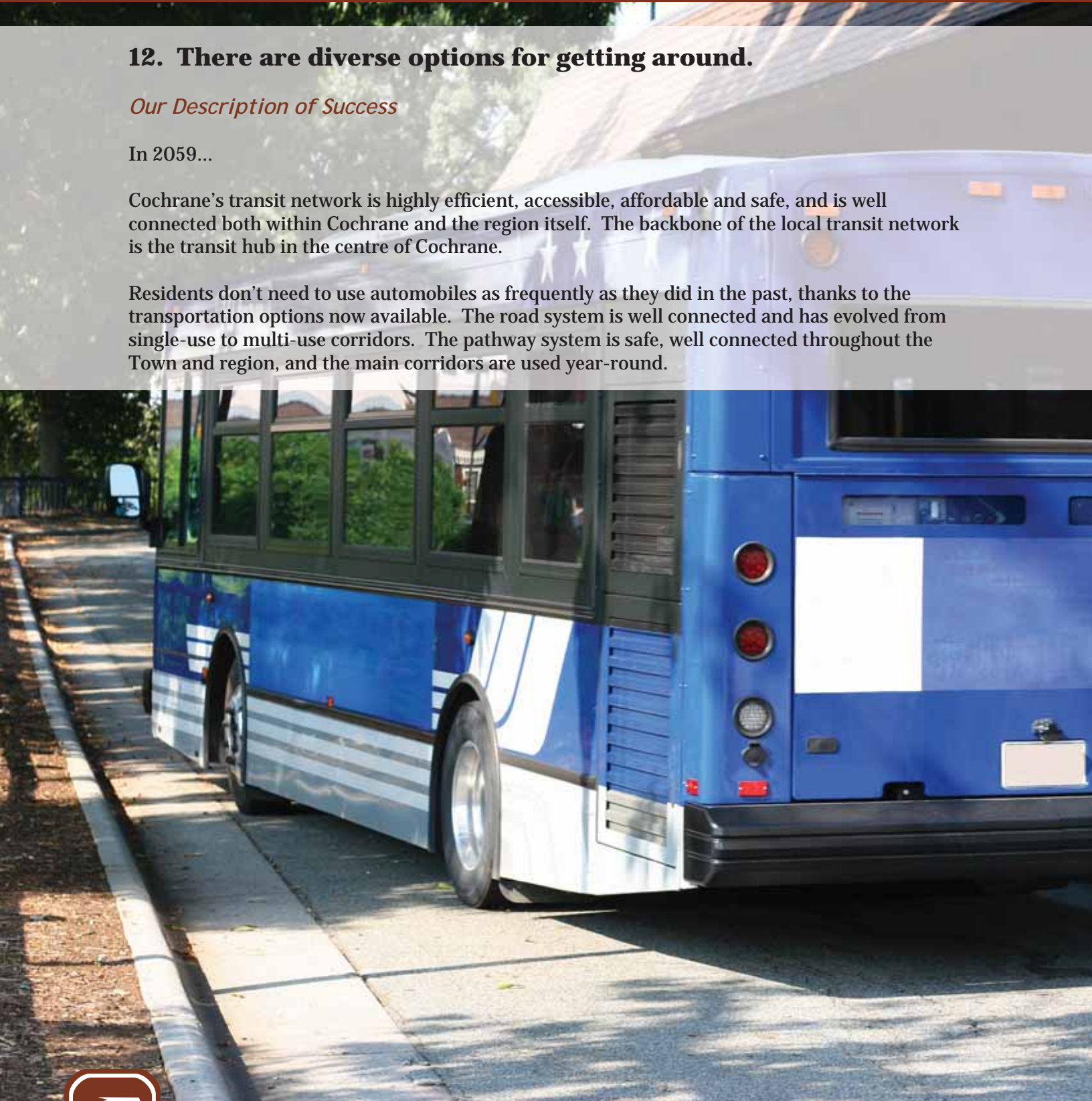
12. There are diverse options for getting around.

Our Description of Success

In 2059...

Cochrane’s transit network is highly efficient, accessible, affordable and safe, and is well connected both within Cochrane and the region itself. The backbone of the local transit network is the transit hub in the centre of Cochrane.

Residents don’t need to use automobiles as frequently as they did in the past, thanks to the transportation options now available. The road system is well connected and has evolved from single-use to multi-use corridors. The pathway system is safe, well connected throughout the Town and region, and the main corridors are used year-round.



Our Current Reality

Cochrane currently does not have a public transit system in place to serve the local population. There are, however, a number of privately run transit systems operating in and around Cochrane. These services include the Southland commuter bus service transporting commuters to and from Calgary, the Handi-bus that serves seniors and those with disabilities, and the four Handi-buses the ASSIST organization has that are funded by the Town, the Municipal District of Rocky View and community donations.

The Town has a pathway system for pedestrians and cycling. It is not accessible in all seasons for all users, and it does have some gaps in connectivity as mentioned in Pathway 11. The transportation system in Cochrane is automobile focused, and reflects the way the community has evolved over time.

Achievement of this Pathway’s target will depend on regional transit planning, something that Cochrane cannot implement without other regional stakeholders.

The Town has been working with the Calgary Regional Partnership on regional transportation opportunities including a bus rapid transit system (BRT) and heavy commuter rail. Within Town, developers of new communities are being asked to provide transit-ready designs for when the Town does begin providing service in the community.

Targets

By 2029, there is a complete interconnected mode and corridor network throughout Cochrane and its region that is accessible to the full range of vehicular and non-vehicular uses/users.



Cochrane is a Complete Community

13. We build Cochrane on the strengths of our natural and cultural heritage.

Our Description of Success

In 2059...

The people of Cochrane, both past and present, are integral to its continued success as a strong, sustainable and distinct community. Cochrane’s unique identity and small-town feel continue to be rooted in the town’s western heritage, cultural events, community traditions and respect for the area’s natural beauty.

Cochrane is renowned for the preservation of its historic buildings, landscapes, vistas and landmarks. Cochrane’s western heritage and history are well known and highly valued. Cochrane is a model for how to integrate the past, the present and the future through architecture and conservation, while still maintaining the culture of a small town. Working ranches and agricultural operations are retained on the perimeter of the town.

Buildings and landscapes are ecologically sustainable. Regular heritage celebrations attract both visitors and citizens. The Town’s growth reflects the Heritage Plans and policies.

Natural capital is being regenerated through protected green spaces and animal habitats. We promote native plant growth through municipal sponsorship programs. We are aware of the benefits of the natural environment.

We honor our heritage. We respect the land. We protect and preserve our culture and history to sustain them for the generations to come.

Our Current Reality

We recognize that “the retention, maintenance and appreciation of historic buildings, landscapes and structures is one of the most compelling ways to respect the past and enrich the present and future.” (*Heritage Master Plan*, 2002). Long-time Cochrane residents have seen the community evolve from a small ranching community on the Bow River to a larger, more urbanized community. Even though Cochrane has grown and will continue to grow, pride in the western and ranching heritage remains strong, and continues to be important to both new and long-time residents.

Cochrane celebrates its western roots during the Labour Day Weekend celebrations and the Cochrane Rodeo. Western Heritage Design Guidelines are enforced by the Town in order to instill unique community architecture. There is debate in the community as to whether Western Heritage Design Guidelines should apply to all developments, or just to the core of Cochrane. Currently, the Design Guidelines apply to all commercial, industrial and institutional uses in Cochrane.

Today, Cochrane residents are proud of our western and ranching heritage, and our natural landscapes.

Targets

By 2020, natural areas and habitat are maintained or increased.

The values of Western Heritage and meeting the needs of the current reality of the Agriculture sector are reflected in the Town of Cochrane’s development, planning and decision-making processes.



Supporting Resources

Town of Cochrane Sustainability Plan Project Planning Team

Members:

- Kelly Learned – Project manager
- Maggie Armstrong
- Rick Deans
- Laurie Drukier
- Susan Flowers
- Sandy Johnson
- Paige Milner
- Gary Wagner



Purpose:

To provide strategic guidance and recommendations related to the development of the Cochrane Sustainability Plan

Authority:

The Committee reported directly to senior staff. The Committee provided leadership and support to the community for the development of the CSP project.

The functions of this Committee included the following:

- Provide strategic options for Administration and Council's approval (i.e. internal capacity building, public engagement, approach, resources, etc.)
- Develop project work plan for Administration and Council's approval
- Provide cost estimates and budget management
- Regular progress reports
- Support the Citizens Advisory Group and Action Groups

Lead Consultant:



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Funding for the Cochrane Sustainability Plan provided by:

- Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Green Municipal Fund
- Alberta Government, Municipal Sustainability Initiative
- Alberta Government, Municipal Sponsorship Program



