EXPLORING CONTRADICTIONS: THE ROLE OF THE PLANNER AFTER A LIMIT TO GROWTH HAS BEEN REACHED

by

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Abstract

Few examples in a North American context exist where a limit to commercial growth have been established. The Town of Banff, within Canada’s oldest national park, is a municipality that had a limit established in 1998, and is now approaching build out. In reaching the limit there is uncertainty as the community and municipality begin to plan for a post build out environment.

To investigate views about the growth cap and perceived social and economic impacts, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Banff residents, business owners, and NGO representatives. Although most respondents accept the cap as necessary to sustain what is special about Banff, many expressed frustration over the process by which the cap was established. Four key themes emerged for planning in a post build-out scenario: 1) A clear vision for the objectives of the park and Town need to be agreed on and accepted. Without this, decision makers risk facing continued distrust from constituents and difficulty in implementing changes. 2) Numerous times interview respondents expressed somewhat contradictory views; thus indicating a need for planning processes that allow participants to explore their own values and encourage an openness to learning. 3) The management of Banff National Park needs to shift to a more participatory and transparent model. An advisory roundtable with representatives from Parks Canada and park stakeholders would serve to improve communication and learning, while encouraging more transparent decision-making. 4) Planners routinely interact with a diversity of public interests and are therefore well suited to undertake the tasks of community engagement, consultation and facilitation that are required to create new opportunities for dialogue and learning. Making a transition to sustainability is an ambitious undertaking, but a change that planners are well suited to lead.
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Glossary

Throughout this thesis, Banff can mean a number of different things:

**Banff National Park**: the National Park as designated by the federal government. It may include Banff town site, but not the municipal government entity.

**Town of Banff**: this refers to the municipal government of the town.

**Banff**: in many places I refer simply to Banff. In these cases I am referring to the general Banff area that includes the geographic space that is the town and the park, but not the management entities.

**Other terms used:**

**Need to Reside**: this is a federally mandated requirement that limits residency in the Town of Banff (and Lake Louise and Jasper too) to individuals that are employed in the National Park, operate a business in the National Park, or retired from a job in the Park. This eliminates the potential for homes to be vacation properties that sit empty when the owners are not present. This policy has a medium-high degree of implementation.

**Appropriate Use**: another federal government requirement, this requires businesses operating in the park to be "appropriate" for a national park, and excludes businesses that are "not appropriate". The overarching consideration is how the proposed business contributes to or detracts from the spirit and intent of the Vision for the park, the National Parks Act, and Parks Canada’s policy (based on such criteria as impact on environment, effects on culture and heritage, quality of experience, economic effects, public safety, equity and access, social effects/quality of life, education and awareness, level of use: frequency, timing, and quantity, physical setting related). There has been great difficulty in achieving consensus on what is appropriate (see Ritchie 1998). Consequently, this policy has a low-medium degree of implementation.
Preface

Sustainability is based on the three supposedly equal tenets of social, economic and environmental viability. It is generally accepted that all three must be preserved or the balance will be upset compromising long-term sustainability. I believe this notion of sustainability is flawed and that the environmental component is the critical foundation on which the other two components rest.

Humans depend on the environment for natural resources that make possible our social and economic systems. Without a high degree of environmental health, human existence will either cease to occur or be unimaginably different. Though there may be plenty of debate over the semantics of such an assertion, the Town of Banff within Banff National Park provides a useful case study of a location being governed under a policy framework focussed on the primacy of the environment.

The creation of Banff National Park, established in 1885 as Canada’s first national park and the third in the world, was originally motivated by a complex and somewhat uncertain combination of business, preservation and political objectives. Over the next forty-six years the park evolved under the influences that paralleled the “transformation of the Canadian west to a wilderness outpost of European culture” (Sandford 1995:20).

A significant shift in policy occurred in 1931, when the Federal Government changed the National Parks Act, the legislation that governs the park, to read that the park shall be preserved unimpaired for future generations. I would argue that the developed world is at a comparable stage with respect to “sustainability” as to that of the National Parks Act of 1931: general subscription to the concept of leaving an unimpaired natural environment, but little in the way of application.

The next sixty-seven years in Banff National Park unfolded somewhat parallel to general patterns of material consumption, resource exploitation, and recreation predominant in European culture. In 1988, that pattern changed when the Federal Government again changed the National Parks Act, this time to give primary importance to the ecological integrity of National Parks (Government of Canada 1998). More importantly, in 1998 the federal government gave credence to this mandate by requiring the Town of Banff to cap commercial development rights within the Town boundaries at a level reached at the end of 2004. This action acknowledges the framework, whereby economic growth is subservient to environmental integrity. This cap on
commercial growth in Banff appears to have been implemented without much consideration for impacts such action may have on the economic or social systems within the Town; something rather brusque, but again consistent with the "environment as foundation" framework\(^1\).

Perhaps society in the early part of the 21st Century is in a situation analogous to Banff National Park in the 1930’s: increasingly impacting the environment in ways that will eventually require dramatic government interventions such as the commercial growth cap in Banff. If this is the case, the future may hold other abrupt interventions to protect the natural environment such that it can sustain human economies and social systems. If predictions of environmental degradation come to fruition, then the scenario being played out in the Town of Banff may provide important lessons. Indeed the Town provides an excellent case study of government action to limit economic growth for the sake of environmental health.

There seems to be little appetite for such interventions in the current Canadian economic system. Economic growth is pursued as the holy grail of the business world and economic theory. Therefore the case of the growth cap in Banff raises some significant questions that are of broader relevance: Can the economic health of a region be sustained without this growth? What will the impacts be on the social systems that are supported by the current model of economic development? Can the small scale business owner and community volunteer survive in the face of increasing influence of big Canadian and international corporations? In this case, I look closely at the specific concerns residents and employees of Banff have about impacts on their social and economic future as sustaining the Park ecosystem becomes the ultimate directive. I also look at what the role of planners should be in reconciling the traditional areas of their domain and these broader challenges to social and economic viability in a mountain resort community. I suggest that planners move more assertively into areas that are currently at the fringes of the profession: actively building community and supporting economic competitiveness.

\(^1\) This "environment as foundation" notion is not unusual in protected areas, and in fact has been the impetus for the designation of these areas; however, I argue that the environment as foundation concept is relevant in a much broader sense of development.
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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This chapter reviews the evolution of the notion of sustainability and why Banff National Park, and the Town of Banff, are important case studies of sustainability in practice.

Introduction

Sustainability became a popular theme at the close of the 20th Century. Although it can mean a variety of things to different people, its broad definition makes it easy to love and difficult to oppose. Governments, companies, non-profit groups, and institutions have all scrambled to adopt the rhetoric of sustainability into their operations. As a result, the last twenty years have seen much thought, research, exposure, experimentation and various examples of change all in the name of sustainability. Although it is important to acknowledge the successes so far, in my view there are two important flaws in current sustainability initiatives: the notion that the social, economic and environmental components are equal; and the tendency for sustainability initiatives to focus on the impacts rather than the causes of the most unsustainable aspects of human organisation.

These two weaknesses are beginning to undermine the credibility of sustainability. The seemingly casual inclusion of “sustainability” in vision statements, objectives, goals and speech ignores the difficult decisions that are necessary should we act in a truly sustainable manner. The important first step is to acknowledge the importance of natural systems in sustaining all life. Often, environmental, economic, and social aspects of sustainability are held up as equals, but I assert that without healthy environmental systems as a foundation, social and economic systems would quickly crumble. Thus, a significant paradigm shift is required if current western society is to acknowledge ecological primacy as the critical base on which a sustainable existence can be built.

The Town of Banff provides an important case study of a municipality that operates under legislative guidelines that accept the primary importance of the environment (as established by the federal government, not originally a municipal initiative). Since 1930 the federal policy for national parks aspired to leave them unimpaired for future generations\(^2\). Despite this dictum, the Town

\(^2\) Note the parallel with the much cited aspiration of the 1987 World Commission on Development and Environment: meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED 1987). Further back, First Nations considered each generation in terms of impact for seven generations.
of Banff has been allowed to grow through most of the 20th century similar to other resort communities, in spite of its special location. In 1998 the Canadian federal government acted to substantiate environmental primacy by significantly reducing the limit on commercial activity within the town boundaries. Thus, Banff provides a scenario where well-developed economic systems and an established community, find themselves having to adapt to limits designed first and foremost to protect the environment.

This research focuses primarily on the impacts that may occur from recognition of ecological preservation as the prerequisite for all economic and social systems. As Banff is already a developed resort town, it provides an important case study of the potential effects of necessary ‘interference’ in the prevailing free market system. The second flaw I identified, the focus on the consequences rather than the root causes of an unsustainable system, will be addressed less directly. Some of the strategies for mitigating the negative social and economic impacts of recognising environmental primacy, will hopefully also address aspects of resource use that are unlikely to be possible for the long-term.

A Brief History of 'Sustainability'

For the purposes of this research, I use the broadly cited term sustainability interchangeably with sustainable development as defined by the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development (1987: 43): "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

As has been pointed out by others (Campbell 1996, Southgate and Sharpley 2002, Schellenberger and Nordhaus 2004), support for such a declaration as espoused in Our Common Future is wide spread, largely because to subscribe to the opposite suggests a willing and wanton destruction of life as we know it on earth. The problem is that while few people seem willing to sign-on to the end of life on earth scenario, lifestyles in much of the developed world are far from embodying the "sustainable" option. In the words of Campbell (1996), "the unsustainable scenario is the easiest to define: merely the extrapolation of our current way of life” (pg. 301). The current pattern of resource use seems to be something more like, 'We’re using most of the earth’s natural resources at a rate faster than can be sustained in the long term, but technology should be able to bail us out.'

Despite continued high rates of resource consumption in the developed countries, concern for deteriorating environmental conditions has been on the rise for the last fifty or so years. Southgate and Sharpley (2002) review the rise
of environmental consciousness and what they call the alleged 'environmental crisis'. Some of the key events they identify have been international conferences (1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio - commonly known as the Earth Summit), publications (The Population Bomb in 1968 by Paul Ehrlich, Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring in 1962, the 1972 publication from Massachusetts Institute of Technology researchers The Limits to Growth, and Our Common Future - The report of the World Commission on Environment and Development 1987), and tangible environmental damage (oil tanker crashes in England (The Torrey Canyon in 1967) and the United States (The Exxon Valdez in 1989), the 1984 gas leak disaster in Bhopal India, and acid rain in north-eastern North America and Scandinavia). Establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme also stands as testament to the wide-spread acceptance that human activity at the close of the second millennium is in need of intervention.

These events often included critiques of the prevailing economic theory in most capitalist countries and have led the way for increased awareness and concern regarding environmental health; however, this concern appears to have reached something of a plateau around 1987 with the World Commission on Environment and Development. Thanks in large part to improvements in scientific capability and research, it was around this time that society began to understand the seemingly invisible impacts on the environment. Despite this awareness, not much has changed; decision making on the local scale has not been consistent with the larger societal context (Dearden 1995).

More importantly, individuals seem unwilling to make meaningful changes in their consumption patterns; although support for environmental protection is wide, “it is also frighteningly shallow” (Schellenberger and Nordhaus 2004: 9). Though many people now recycle glass and newspapers, sometimes buy phosphate free detergent, rarely can buy spray cans with CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), buy “dolphin friendly” tuna and some people make lifestyle choices that enable them to drive less, unsustainable choices still dominate the prevalent urban lifestyles in developed countries. Planners have contributed by making some ‘sustainable’ options more palatable or enticing; alternative zoning, provision of rapid transit and better decision-making processes are important successes. Yet, Scott Campbell (1996:297) suggests that despite the recent popularity of environmental issues evident in planners and planning schools, the output of the profession has largely been the opposite: “our historic tendency has been to promote the development of cities at the cost of natural destruction: to build cities we have cleared forest, fouled rivers and air, levelled mountains.” While Campbell acknowledges that some planners also work to protect the natural environment, it can be argued
that planners have had only a modest impact on levels of human consumption and the inefficiencies apparent in our modern society.

**Why is Sustainability so elusive?**

Sustainability is about the many choices we make in how we consume goods. However, the consumer has become so far removed from the process of production, whether it be food, building supplies, newspapers, household appliances, or cars, that it is hard to know the many decisions that were made along the steps of growth, construction, assembly, mode of transportation, etc. While the consumer may subscribe to the notion of sustainability, in the current organisation of our systems of production and consumption, the onus is largely left to the consumer to ensure the products consumed meet the commitment to sustainability. In this scenario, the customer is obliged to ask questions at the grocery store, hardware store, mall, or corner store to ensure that they are not compromising planetary sustainability - clearly unrealistic.

The alternative to asking these important questions has been to place our trust in governments and corporations. While there is some scepticism of governments in North America, most people are willing to trust that the various levels of government are ensuring that products are created somewhat sustainably. Most people know little about how the government manages forests in British Columbia or Alberta, but we have to rely on governments to protect the long-term viability of the forests. Even more so, when in the grocery store we trust that the food is safe and generally healthy to eat. We need to trust the regulatory systems to be able to function in modern urban life, as one can hardly ask the cashier in the grocery store if the rice being bought was grown in a sustainable manner - mostly because she or he would have no idea. There are an increasing number of choices regarding organic foods, recycled toilet paper, and biodegradable detergents, but still it is a minority of people making these choices. We often hear that producers will respond if that is what the market demands, but given the disconnect between choice and impact, it is insufficient to allow people to choose for themselves in an unregulated marketplace. One answer, according to University of British Columbia professor Bill Rees\(^3\), lies in what he calls the sustainability conundrum:

\[ \text{No individual or country can be sustainable on its own. Unsustainability is the ultimate common-property/public good problem. It can be solved only through mutual coercion mutually agreed upon. (Rees 2002)} \]

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\(^3\) Bill Rees is associated with the Ecological Footprint concept (see Wackernagel and Rees 1996).
Sustainability applied in a free-market capitalist society is a value question: What is appropriate to buy, to use, to make, to sell, or to have? As I said in the preface, practically everyone would say that they are in favour of sustainability, yet sustainability is not something that can be prescribed; the role of the individual is too strong in most developed countries.

Almost without exception richer societies consume more and are inherently less sustainable. We are awash with money; people one hundred and two hundred years ago could scarcely imagine the wealth we have now (see Gross Domestic Product growth rates). Rather than feeling wealthy though, most people’s expectation of what is reasonable to expect has changed. My father-in-law, who is in his late fifties, recently told me he remembers going to a restaurant for the first time when he was thirteen. On the other hand, I go out for a meal, whether it is breakfast, lunch or dinner, more than once a week. Slowly, over time, our expectations have changed.

Another key factor is the decreasing friction of distance. As Mark Roseland (1992:23) explains, “Most North American cities were built using technologies which assumed that abundant and cheap energy would be available forever. Communities therefore grew inefficiently, and became dependent on lengthy distribution systems.” Almost daily, more than 300 residents from Canmore, Alberta drive 100 kilometres east to Calgary where they work. Distance has become an inconvenience rather than an impediment; presuming an inexpensive energy source continues to be available.

Despite all this affluent wealth, newfound mobility, and opportunity to consume goods of the service industry, when governments suggest enforcing environmental regulations that may impact the economy (i.e. Kyoto Accord), the media often reports an outcry about economic austerity, tough times, and job losses. It seems that society is having trouble adopting sustainability by choice.

Banff National Park and Sustainability
Banff National Park provides a useful example of the disconnect between our actions and their impacts. One of the key points determined during the Banff Bow Valley Study was that:

- a significant percentage of the population, which has not been exposed to or does not appreciate the significance of the scientific evidence, find it difficult, based on what they had observed, to understand the ecological impacts that have occurred. With green slopes, abundant elk and sheep and sparkling waters, what could possibly be wrong? Perception is and continues to be difficult to overcome (Hodgins et al. 2000: 281).
Banff's relevance to sustainability goes beyond providing an example of environmental primacy; it also provides a useful comparison for present consumption levels of natural resources. Boyd, summarizing Woodley's research states, "Woodley (1993), in developing suitable indicators of sustainability for parks, challenges the appropriateness of using the term sustainable tourism within a park context, putting forward the argument that if there is to exist any type of sustainability, then it must be based first on ecosystem sustainability" (Boyd 2000: 167). Our current society and lifestyle in the developed world is something I believe to be similar to the scene in Banff National Park in the 1930's. The National Parks Act talked about preserving the park for future generations, yet commercial growth in the following seventy years was substantial and consistent. Visitors to Banff today may not see the stress the ecosystem is under⁴, but scientific research has proven this to be the case - the impacts are real: wildlife habitat fragmentation, decreased water quality, disruption of natural forces and balances, overcrowding and introduction of non-native species (BBVS 1996). Similarly, current human patterns of consumption ignore the inalienable fact that much of what we produce, use, and dispose of, is made from non-renewable products that have only been consumed heavily in the last fifty to one hundred years. If this analogy is accurate, society has a period of status quo ahead of us. At some point, however, there will be a need to shift towards sustainability, and that change may require government regulation as in the case of the Banff growth cap.

Bringing this perspective on consumption, environmental importance, and sustainability back to focus on the point at hand, we see the Town of Banff as confronting many of these issues directly and immediately. While Banff has not necessarily addressed many of its unsustainable aspects (inefficient transportation systems, complete reliance on imported goods, encouraging consumption of the tourism experience), there has been a critical recognition that continued commercial expansion would further harm the surrounding ecosystem.

The extension of these value questions impacts the role of planners in implementing sustainability. There is no obvious path for sustainability planners and the profession is often seen trying to define itself and its role in being a leader (McClendon 2003, Campbell 1996). I have argued that planning has yet to significantly influence the value based challenges to sustainability;

⁴ However, other visitors do see problems with the current state of Banff: "Every time I return to Banff, I am increasingly disturbed by the changes I see. If any single park can be said to be hemorrhaging the most from overuse and development within its boundaries, it's got to be Banff" (Searle 2000:45).
however, lessons from Banff may provide a useful example of a municipality that has limited growth and is moving toward a more sustainable system of governance.

**Sustainability and Municipalities**

Many municipalities around the world have adopted sustainability into their missions, goals, objectives and broad plans. Examples of this can be seen not just in words, but also actions: bans on ozone depleting compounds in Irvine, California; vehicle tolls to enter the city centre in Oslo, Norway and London, England; increased residential density in the city centre of Vancouver, Canada; an urban growth boundary in Portland, Oregon (Roseland, 1992), to name a few. The Town of Banff, Alberta, has also embraced the notion of sustainability: "Banff: A Sustainable National Park Community" is one of the three themes that underlie the community vision. This theme is described as being "a leader in environmental planning matters, and is an example of sustainable development and sustainable tourism" (Town of Banff, Banff Community Plan, 1998: 17).

However, it is important to note that although Banff is an incorporated municipality, its situation is unlike most other North American municipalities. Because of the town’s location in a National Park, the federal government has retained the ultimate government decision-making authority and can overrule any municipal decision. The federal government has enforced recognition of environmental protection as paramount.

While Banff’s governance model is unique, perhaps the growth cap example will be relevant to other municipalities in the future. In my opinion, this is advisable for I believe social and economic concerns will seem less crucial once the environment, which sustains life, is seen to be seriously threatened. I also think that planners will have an important role to play in facilitating a new kind of society where economy and community development, as we know them, are secondary to environmental concerns.
Chapter 2 - Banff National Park

This chapter briefly describes the creation of Banff National Park and the changing management mandate over the last 120 years.

"We argue strongly that it is impossible to understand, and hope to be able to resolve, many of the current issues facing national parks in the context of tourism without understanding the origins of the parks and their links with tourism" (Boyd and Butler 2000: 13).

Figure 2.1 Location Map from the Banff Bow Valley Study (Source BBVS 1996a)

Geographic Location
Banff National Park is located in Western Canada and is a small piece of the Rocky Mountain spine that runs vertically through western North America. Banff National Park is 6641 km² in area. Along with the adjacent National Parks (Jasper, Yoho and Kootenay) and Provincial Parks (Mount Assiniboine, Mount Robson and Hamber) to the west and north of Banff National Park, they form a United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
World Heritage site. The World Heritage Site is 20 000 km$^2$, or almost half the size of Switzerland (48%), and is afforded this special designation in recognition of their special significance for all humans.

The eroded sedimentary geology of the Canadian Rockies forms the dramatic peaks and rugged landscape that visitors flock to see; however, Banff National Park also contains the gentlest east-west route through the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Forces of moving glaciers and running water have alternated in cutting a wide valley through the Rocky Mountains in which the Bow River now flows. This topographic weakness has made the Bow Valley an important transportation conduit since the ice left roughly 11,000 years ago.

The Park’s Origins

The gentle exception to the otherwise inhospitable landscape was first realised by native aboriginal groups that camped on the shores of the Vermillion Lake, just a few kilometres from the present Banff town site. More recent evidence points towards the Kootenay Native group as the first inhabitants of the area, although there was travel between a variety of native tribes (Gadd 1999). Although a variety of Europeans passed through the Bow Valley in the 1800’s, dramatic changes began when three railway workers stumbled across the mineral hot spring pools on the side of Sulphur Mountain in 1883. The Stoney native people were previously aware of the pools and had even given two Americans directions to the pool eight years before in 1875. However, it was three railway workers, some of Banff’s earliest transient workers, and the ensuing attention that would change the area forever. Competing claims were staked with the intent of developing and exploiting the commercial opportunities that were possible. In part to diffuse the controversy, in 1885 the federal government declared the 26 km$^2$ around the pools a National Reserve to be preserved for the public (Gadd 1999).

While the hot springs have been an important attraction, the natural beauty and trans-national transportation objectives have played a critical role in enabling the development of the park and its role as a tourist destination. Local writer, naturalist, and historian, Robert Sandford observes that:

> The transformation of the Canadian west from a wilderness to an outpost of European culture was as much business as politically motivated. It is no accident that corporate interest was sewn into the very history of the Canadian west and the very fabric of Canada’s national park system. (Sandford 1994: 20)

Initially Canadian Pacific Railway drove these business objectives as it tried to recover the huge investments made in meeting their obligations to complete the trans-national railway (Boyd and Butler 2000). Canadian Pacific Railway has had a long-standing role as one of the leaders in the Canadian tourism industry, through its operations in rail, steamships and hotels. In the Rocky
Mountains, the C.P.R. has played a pivotal role in the development of tourism infrastructure through their efforts to put passengers on their trains and guests in their hotels. Swiss mountain guides were brought from Europe to introduce the European way of mountaineering to North Americans, and hiking trails were constructed around their stations and hotels (Sandford 1994). For the C.P.R. and Banff, the link between tourism and transportation has been strong.

Although the natural reserve had been declared around the hot springs in 1885, there was little precedence for this kind of land designation. As a result, there was little in the way of firm policy direction to guide the park from the late 1880's through to 1911. Modelled on the American example in Yellowstone National Park, the Canadian Government passed the Rocky Mountain Parks Act in 1887 and emphasised public enjoyment and recreation (Butler and Boyd 2000). Although the park was expanded in 1902 to encompass an area over twice the size of the current Banff National Park, the lands became more developed: tourism development continued, a coal mine was established a few kilometres from the Banff town site, and the railway pushed further west towards the Pacific.

The Changing Park Mandate
Changes to the definition of a National Park took place in 1911 when the park, then named Rocky Mountain National Park, was significantly reduced in size, partly in response to lobbying and concern by the resource extraction interests and ranchers in these areas. Yet at the same time, clarification on the intent of a national park was provided in the National Parks Act which stated: "There will be no business there except such as is absolutely necessary for the recreation of the people" (quoted in BBVS p.13). While this is a significant step forward in clarifying some of the conservation limits to be inherent in a national park, it also identifies recreation and tourism as appropriate. As a result, the next forty-five years were defined by marketing Banff as a tourist and recreation destination. In the words of Corneleus Van Horne, a C.P.R. manager, "if we can’t export the scenery, we’ll import the tourists" (Hart 1983, qtd. in BBVS 1996: 13).

From the beginning, Banff was marketed towards the wealthy as a way to experience nature as only the wealthiest people could afford the time and money required to travel 100 years ago. Accordingly, Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald saw Banff as a place that could be exploited for its revenue generating potential and ordered "villa lots at Banff to be plotted and then 'leased out to wealthy people.' He assured parliament that 'the doubtful class of people,' meaning poorer Canadians, would not be welcome in the new resort. He approved expenditures to 'make the park useful' with carriage roads, bath houses and picnic grounds. From the start he insisted that the park must generate revenues and 'recoup the treasury.'" (Marty 2002: 109)
Butler and Boyd (2000: 9) note that "with respect to tourism, the built infrastructure often emphasised grandeur, for example hotels being castle-like in appearance; hardly surprising as the first tourists were the elite of society who could afford to travel." In 1911 the highway from Calgary to Banff was completed, providing relatively easy access to the park accessible for more than just the wealthiest of visitors. It was a few more decades before car ownership became commonplace in North America, but this transportation link made the park somewhat more democratic in terms of decreasing the economic barriers for many potential visitors.

While technological innovations enabled a greater variety of visitors, it wasn't until the National Parks Act adopted in 1930, that a broader social aspect of the park was recognised. One of the most quoted portions of this Act reads: "The Parks are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to the provision of the Act and Regulations, and such parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations (quoted in Boyd and Butler 2000 - originally quoted by Lothian 1977: 8).” This statement is ambitious, but like the notion of sustainability, undisputable given the alternative.

Two important principles came out of this statement; firstly the recognition that all Canadians have an equal interest in the park. Although there have been no policies enacted specifically encouraging lower-income visitors or any limits on the amount of development targeted to the wealthy, the democratic recognition that all Canadians have an interest in the preservation of the park was significant. At least theoretically, this gives the Banff hotel operator, the Manitoba farmer, or the Nova Scotia fisherman an equal right to enjoy the national park in the future. The second, and perhaps more significant outcome of this policy statement, was the recognition that no activity or development should degrade the environment of the park such that future visitors are not able to have the same opportunities to enjoy the natural attractions.

Despite these two tenets guiding the park, the years following 1930 saw continued development that emphasized the "enjoyment" rather than preservation aspect of Park policy. 1931 saw the beginning of a nine year Great Depression make-work project to construct a highway between Banff and

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5 Interestingly, in 1905 the government prohibited any kind of motor vehicles from Banff National Park. Eventually the automobile lobby wore down the restriction and by 1914 cars could travel any of the roads in the park. The growth of automobile tourism freed visitors from relying on expensive railway hotels and led to the creation of campgrounds and "bungalow camps", early examples of motor hotels and motels (Marty 2002).
Jasper. Then, during World War II, further road work was assigned to Canadians of Japanese ancestry and "conscientious objectors to conscription" (Gadd 1995, 705).

Growing Visitation
Augmenting vehicle-based visitation was the development of the commercial aircraft and suddenly entire new tourism markets were possible. These transportation networks were key developments, both good and bad, that made a much broader park experience available to a larger number of people and encouraged significantly more visitation. Some conservationists saw increased visitation to the park as a means of encouraging support for the park concept and protection from activities such as mining and logging. In 1950, 500,000 people visited Banff National Park, but combined with rising incomes and an increase in leisure time, this number had grown to 2,000,000 in 1967 (BBVS 1996:15).

In the period after World War II, the recreation-tourism development paradigm continued to be the dominant basis for decision making in the park. To be fair however, the ill-effects of increased development were (and still are) difficult to see. The observant resident of the Park would perhaps notice a change in wildlife patterns, the intrusion of non-native plant species, damage caused by careless residents, businesses or visitors, but overall the park would seem to be a fairly unspoiled place. It is largely thanks to a growing body of scientific knowledge and techniques that we are aware of impacts illustrating how the landscape is being damaged in ways that are limiting the ability of future generations to enjoy the park unimpaired.

The next significant change occurred in the 1960's with society's growing environmental consciousness. In Banff, this coincided with proposals to host the 1964, 1968, and 1972 Winter Olympics. These bids, particularly the last one in 1972, were subject of vigorous opposition by the emerging environmental movement. Lake Louise Ltd. (the alpine ski area operator) and Imperial-Oil promoted the 1972 bid. This partnership met strong opposition and resulted in increased public debate about what was appropriate for national parks.

The public controversy caused the federal government to pause and convene public hearings. Eventually, the minister responsible, the Hon. Jean Chretien, rejected the proposal as too big for the location and socially too exclusive for the mandate of the national parks. A former Superintendent of Banff National Park saw this event as a critical turning point. In his comments to the Banff-Bow Valley Study, he stated: "we have never gotten beyond that, never managed to recover from that." The skiing issue was symbolic of a much deeper public concern about appropriate use in national parks. This included concern about new hotels, highways, golf courses and shopping facilities. (BBVS 1996: 15)
The years after the Olympic bid proposals through the 1970's and 1980's saw continued gradual tourism development, ski area expansion and an upgrading of the highway. Tourism in the Bow Valley reached a critical threshold; at this point Banff and Lake Louise became winter destinations to complement the summer visitors. This was in part driven by a management shift at the Canadian Pacific hotels to remain open in winter and promote the Canadian Rockies as a year-round resort. The impact of this was significant, not only in the winter, but also in the shoulder seasons of spring and fall which had previously been very quiet. These shoulder seasons are especially important as times of year for wildlife mating and birthing, and had previously been times of low park visitation (BBVS 1996: 15).

Although tourism development continued, it was by no means unregulated. Large numbers of managers and park officials were (and still are) aware and concerned about the impacts of continued growth and a general societal awareness of environmental issues. Increasingly decisions to allow further development were questioned and criticized. Still under the sole jurisdiction of the federal government, many important decisions were made at high levels of the federal government with little accountability to on-the-ground administration, or even local residents (BBVS 1996).

**The Emergence of Ecological Primacy**

The growing divide between providing "visitor experience" and greater preservationist goals was felt by those charged with managing parks and protected areas in Canada. The conflict between development and preservation is perhaps best articulated by Thompson (quoted in Dearden 1995):

"... we found out in 1989 that we were not what we thought we were. Like all park agencies we had always seen ourselves as a recreation agency which protected land. The public clearly sees us as a conservation agency which provides certain compatible recreation opportunities."

The 1990's saw pivotal changes in the governance of Banff National Park. The first major change occurred in 1990 when Banff was incorporated as a Town and was given most of the same statutory powers as other Alberta communities. As environmental awareness and concerns about over-development were growing in the public, the federal government responded in 1992 when it created the Banff-Bow Valley study, a major research task force that addressed a wide range of issues from ecological integrity to social conditions and recreational expectations to economic impacts of tourism. The

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6 However, the federal government retains control over all planning decision in the form of having representatives on the planning committees and being able to over-rule any decisions made by the municipal authority.
final report of this task force has significantly influenced policy decisions in the years since its release in 1996.

**Limits to Commercial Growth**

At the time of Banff’s incorporation in 1990, a limit on commercial growth was put in place. At that time, there was approximately 2,000,000 square feet of commercial development, and the limit was established at 8,000,000 square feet. In 1992 the commercial growth cap was decreased to approximately 5,000,000.

In Scott Campbell’s article (1996) about moving towards sustainability, he suggests democratic choice (referendum/elections) as a means for generating a wider debate. This was tried in some degree when the Town of Banff held a referendum on future levels of commercial growth in March of 1998. The options for the vote ranged from no further development, to almost unrestricted growth. The voting provided a diversity of opinions with no clear single winner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial Development Options</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 850,000</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 650,000 and 850,000</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 650,000</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No commercial development</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voter turnout was 44% of eligible voters (2193 of 5000 registered voters).

Currently the 1992 Land Use Bylaw allows for a further redevelopment/expansion of approximately 2,450,000 square feet. As a resident of Banff, which ONE of the following commercial development options do you support?

Based in part on the plebiscite results and further consultation with residents and businesses, the 1998 Banff Community Plan submitted by the Town to the federal minister allowed for a permanent total of approximately 850,000 square feet of additional development on existing commercial land. In response to the Town of Banff submission, and based in part on the final report of the Banff Bow Valley Study, a lengthy Minister’s Communiqué stated the maximum allowed future commercial growth would be 350,000 square feet. This alienated a certain portion of the Banff population as they (predictably) felt like they did not have a real voice in the decision that perhaps affected them the most. The salient points here are, first, that the referendum was a municipal initiative, yet the federal government holds the ultimate decision making power over such matters. Second, the National Parks are just that, national; to only ask the residents of Banff what degree of growth is appropriate is ignoring the fact that all Canadian have some say in decisions about Banff.
Governance in Banff
Where does responsibility lie for the period of continued growth that occurred in the last one hundred years despite the 1930's mandate that the parks be left unimpaired for future generations? Rather than point the finger of blame at a certain level of government or management department, Hodgins et al. (2000: 282) point to
"inconsistent application of the National Parks Act and Parks Canada's Policy. Some of the explanation lies in the evolution of Banff National Park, some in ad hoc decision-making and some in weak political will in the face of a range of interest-based lobbying."
The numerous separate and seemingly small decisions that were made by the federal managers and politicians often failed to understand the cumulative impact on the ecosystem. To be fair to these decision makers, this was due in part to an incomplete understanding of complex ecological systems, and although science has progressed, human understanding of these systems is far from complete. As argued in the previous chapter, without a clear understanding and indisputable science explaining impacts, it is difficult to determine what is an appropriate route of action.

The degree to which interested parties are involved in decision making is a challenge for both public and private managers. Considerations of time, complexity, availability of information, and whether there is need for public acceptance for effective implementation can be pragmatic limitations to the type of citizen or employee involvement in a decision process (Thomas 1995). Boyd (2000: 177) suggests that "it is a dangerous assumption to state that local people are always in the best position to make appropriate decisions and take effective action where planning parks is involved; however, Kim and Mauborgne (2002) argue that as long as the process is deemed fair by those affected, there will be support for almost any decision. It is unclear whether or not society will regulate itself in light of uncertain conclusions or impacts. It took a bold step from the federal government to enact first steps of sustainability for the National Park, first in the form of the Banff - Bow Valley Study, and secondly placing the growth cap to limit future human impacts. However, Searle (2000: 42) makes the point that:

Only a strong constituency of public support will ensure that the government follows through with the [Banff-Bow Valley Study] panel's recommendations. The responsibility for maintaining ecological integrity cannot rest solely with the government or Parks Canada; they cannot do the job alone. If our national Parks are to remain wild, then all Canadians must come to recognise how they share in this responsibility.

I agree that top-down imposition of regulation is less likely to gain long-term support or be adopted by the public or business interests7. However, I also

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7 This view was confirmed in the interviews conducted for this research - numerous of those interviewed expressed frustration at the top-down approach to Park management and the establishment of the growth cap (although many also accept that it was necessary).
contend that the existing economy-environment relationship is unlikely to generate the "shift in world views [which] is necessary to maintain and restore the ecological integrity of our National Parks" (Searle 2000: 42).

Scott Campbell (1996) and many others, suggest that sustainability is to be found after a long slow transition, rather than a top-down directive such as that issued by Parks Canada:

To achieve complete sustainability across all sectors and/or all places, however, requires such complex restructuring and redistribution that the only feasible path to global sustainability is likely to be a long, incremental accumulation of local and industry-specific advances.

What this incremental, iterative approach means is that planners will find their vision of a sustainable city developed best at the conclusion of contested negotiations over land use, transportation, housing, and economic development policies, not as the premise for beginning the effort. To first spend years in the hermetic isolation of universities and environmental groups, perfecting the theory of sustainable development, before testing it in community development is backwards. (Campbell 1996: 304-305)

Campbell may be correct in his optimism for a sustainability that originates from a long learning process, but his final comment suggesting universities and environmental groups are somehow out of touch seems as dangerously naive. To begin with, the Banff-Bow Valley Study relied heavily on knowledge and expertise of university researchers to understand the complex ecological systems of the National Park. Second, it is the federal government’s long-term objective of preserving the park unimpaired that is the basis for limiting future development. Although some individuals may feel similarly, the current business model fails to account for the long-term impacts and values. I believe Campbell’s comment that sustainability should not be "the premise for beginning the effort" is misguided. Efforts in Norway, a nation showing leadership in implementing sustainable initiatives, have demonstrated the importance of having strong leadership, as well as "external funding by support agencies (and particularly the actions of national and local authorities in creating a supportive cultural climate)" (Eligh et al. 2002:232). This provides an important call to task for federal and municipal governments to provide the necessary resources to enable planners to be proactive rather than responsive to status quo development practices.

Another important consideration of the Banff Bow Valley Study was its use of public participation and a roundtable format to inform the final report (Hodgins et al. 2000). It is difficult to say how much decision-making authority was actually devolved to these stakeholder groups, given the end result was primarily written by the task force; this appears to have been consultation more than participation. Furthermore, while the Banff-Bow Valley Study has no
doubt informed policy decisions, there has been no public participation in the process of making subsequent implementation decisions.

A final note regarding Campbell’s vision of “complete sustainability” relates to his conclusion that it will only be achieved at the end of a long road. Although Banff may be making important steps towards a greater awareness of future impacts, I don’t have any illusions that the commercial growth cap in itself will achieve complete sustainability. Where I differ from Campbell, is that I believe the top-down direction from the government to implement the growth cap is an important starting point that seems to have been missing from the previous “contested negotiations”. Perhaps the citizens of Banff could have eventually reached a better solution, but as time passes, impact on the natural systems in Banff is undoubtedly increasing.

The environmental reality is tempered by the conclusion that, “The [Banff-Bow Valley] study was less successful in gaining support for some of the recommendations that affected human use and development” (Hodgins et al. 2000: 286). This lack of support manifests itself in Banff residents and business owners as concern over uncertainty and frustration at the process. One of the key recommendations from the review by Hodgins et al. was to “Develop management tools in cooperation with public users, to help build public support” (2000: 289). If municipal planners, or other stakeholders, want to play a role in proactively and effectively mitigating these concerns a better understanding of the social and economic effects of the cap is required. In the next chapter I examine some of the theory behind tourism development, issues related to community development in tourism dominated communities, and weak and strong sustainability.
Chapter 3 - Tourism Development in Banff

This chapter is intended to review some of the economic (namely tourism) and social aspects and interactions within the community of Banff.

Introduction - Preservation and Tourism

"Tourism transcends political boundaries and brings people of the world closer together through the understanding of different cultures, environments and heritage. Tourism is potentially one of the most important vehicles for promoting understanding, trust and goodwill amongst the people of the world!"

-- Louis J. D'Amore (Founder and President, International Institute for Peace through Tourism qtd. at www.trailofthegreatbear.com)

As described in Chapter 2, tourism development has been intertwined with the establishment of Banff National Park from the earliest days of European presence in the area. The role of tourism in the park has changed little since 1885, while preservation objectives of the park have evolved over the last 120 years. It can be argued that pure conservation of natural systems would best be achieved by not having any human activity at all; however, many contributions that the park ecosystem and landscape provide to human experience are most strongly realised when visited and appreciated by people. From the core vision of the Banff National Park Management Plan (2004):

"People from around the world participate in the life of the park, finding inspiration, enjoyment, livelihood and understanding. Through their wisdom and foresight in protecting this small part of the planet, Canadians demonstrate leadership in forging healthy relationships between people and nature."

If it is accepted that tourism and preservation occur at the expense of one another, the positive contributions of tourism need to be assessed.

Tourism Development - who benefits?

Contrary to the optimistic statement by Louis J. D'Amore at the beginning of this chapter, other writers have written about tourism development more pragmatically, "The most obvious potential benefits that tourism can bring to destination communities are economic" (Bosselman et al. 1999: 3). Banff National Park and the Town of Banff are significant economic generators, in terms of employment, wealth, tax revenue, foreign exchange, and tourism promotion. While tourism offers many compelling economic benefits, these enticements are worthy of further investigation. Summarizing a vast body of
literature on development and tourism, Telfer (2002) takes a multidisciplinary approach and identifies four main paradigms of tourism development: Modernization, Dependency, Economic Neoliberalism, and Alternative Development.

Modernization is the premise of enabling a ‘modern’ way of life through investment, foreign exchange, creation of employment, technology transfer, and establishing tourism as a commodity of experiences and enjoyment. Dependency sites tourism destinations as geographic and economic peripheries of the industrialized core, dominated by protectionist state governments or "large multinational First World companies" (Telfer 2002: 55). Economic Neoliberalism uses tourism investment capital as an incentive in exchange for structural adjustment that reduces the size of government, reduces state monopolies, sells state assets to private companies, and allows for greater foreign investment and ownership. Finally, Alternative Development champions small-scale locally owned enterprises, citizen participation, and cultural and environmental sensitivity/preservation.

Telfer’s four paradigms are useful as "the basis of the analysis to which tourism development is later evaluated" (Telfer 2002: 35-36). By examining the positives and negatives of each paradigm, Telfer’s framework allows for the questioning of the appropriateness and sustainability of tourism development. Telfer asserts that these four paradigms generally represent a temporal progression as analysis of tourism benefits and costs have become more sophisticated and transparent, with the final stage, Alternative Development, responding to criticism that the first three ignored the environment and the notion of long-term sustainability.

Tourism development in Banff has followed the progression of the first three paradigms, and has some elements of the Alternative Development model. While the tourism industry has adopted the rhetoric of sustainability to some degree, there is still a gap between espoused principles and actual practices. As an act of consumption, there is some question as to whether tourism is inherently unsustainable.

An important distinction about tourism in remote regions (coastal, mountain, desert) is the inability to produce many goods locally. This is a critical barrier to achieving Telfer’s model of Alternative Development, and sustainability in

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8 Development as defined by: "continuous and positive change in the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions of the human condition, guided by the principle of freedom of choice and limited by the capacity of the environment to sustain such change" (Sharpley 2002: 27).
9 "On a global scale, the only fully sustainable tourism is to make the tourists stay at home.” (quoted in McCool et al. 1998)
general. In consideration of appropriate and sustainable tourism development, "one of the most important considerations stressed is the significance of linkages to local communities and the importance of strengthening backward economic linkages, which can increase the multiplier effect and reduces the high levels of leakage that are documented in the literature" (Telfer 2002: 76).

To understand the importance of linkages, and the economic benefits of tourism in Banff, it is useful to understand the linkages referred to by Telfer.

**Economic Multipliers - A Challenge for Banff**

The economic benefits of tourism expenditure are measured through economic multipliers (Goeldner and Ritchie 2003). When a visitor spends money in a tourism enterprise (e.g. hotel, restaurant, gift shop, tour company) this is called an 'initial' or 'direct' effect and triggers additional benefits. The income derived from the direct effect is subsequently spent on materials and services to sustain the original derivative expenditure made by visitors - this is the 'indirect effect' of tourism expenditures. The 'employment multiplier', sometimes measured as 'induced effect', is the final multiplier and is a measure of the direct and indirect employment associated with the addition of each job to the export sector of a community. For example, an additional 1.0 job directly related to the tourism sector may result in 0.13 of a job created in indirect industries (e.g. restaurant suppliers, construction workers, aircraft manufacturers).

If 'indirect' expenditures or 'employment multipliers' are not realised in the local community, they are considered 'leakages' and the benefits are lost. For example, if a hotel in Banff is owned by a German company, hires some German employees, and imports food, furniture, and gift items from Germany, its economic contribution to the local economy is negligible. If tourism has strong links to the local market, stronger multipliers result; conversely, if there are few links to the local market, tourism expenditures are lost to the area providing the visitor services and managing the impacts of tourism visitation. The key factor here is determining at what scale local community is defined; if this includes nearby communities such as Canmore and Calgary, then the economic benefits of Banff as a destination prove valuable despite not being realised within the town itself. If, however, we include all of Alberta or Canada in the analysis, then Banff becomes a more successful economic generator. Yet, as the amount of foreign ownership increases, contributions to the economic benefits of park visitation are less. This points to the importance of locally (or regionally) owned businesses operating in Banff.

**Banff: structural service industry town**

Assessing the benefits from indirect and multiplier effects is complicated because of the Town's location within a National Park. The agreement that
established the Town of Banff as a municipality semi-autonomous from the federal government states that the purpose of the town of Banff is "...to serve, as its primary function, as a visitor centre for visitors to the Park and to provide such visitors with accommodation and other goods and services" (Government of Canada and Government of Alberta 1990)." This is significant, as it effectively requires the majority of businesses that provide materials and services to support the primary tourism services to be located outside the park. This undermines the ability of the local community to benefit from the indirect and employment multipliers that are contemplated by Telfer’s model of Alternative (Sustainable) Tourism Development. Instead, the local tourism industry can only provide the lower quality service industry employment opportunities, while leaving the community to deal with some of the negative impacts of tourism without receiving the full benefits.\footnote{To be fair, the federal government is responsible for managing and maintaining the Park facilities that are the prime tourism attraction; however, the municipality does pay $550,000.00 in annual rent to the federal government as all lands in the park are leased from the Canadian Government rather than owned fee simple.}

In answer to the question posed earlier about who benefits from tourism development in Banff, the town’s location within the National Park is a significant barrier to achieving the highest economic benefits from tourism development. In this sense, Banff may be seen as an important economic generator, but largely these benefits will be accrued by regions that are not directly responsible for the management of the tourism experience or mitigation of tourism’s negative impacts. The economic benefits of tourism in Banff are limited to the direct expenditures by visitors as most of the industries that would benefit from multipliers are prohibited from the Park.

Under the current tourism development paradigm, the key benefits to the community of Banff come from the locally owned buildings and businesses. This is recognised by Telfer as local ownership is another important component for gauging the quality of tourism development. There are no studies of the current ownership patterns in Banff, and few examples of scenarios where government intervention has facilitated (or required) local ownership as a preference to free-market development. It is clearly an ambitious project to determine the methods and tools available to promote a shift toward more sustainable tourism development given the neo-liberal tourism development model that defines most tourism destinations.

If it is accepted that tourism in Banff currently provides an important economic base on which the community has come to depend, the current community has an interest in the continued health of Banff as a destination.
One of the “Key Themes” of the Banff National Park Management Plan (2004) acknowledges that, “A healthy economic climate, based on the heritage values of the park, contributes to national, provincial and local economies”.

**Tourism Trends**

In terms of the economic aspect of sustainability, Banff’s economic health and vitality is synonymous with tourism. International tourism has experienced significant growth since 1950 with world wide international arrivals increasing from less than 50 million in 1950 to 455 million in 1995 and 703 million in 2002 (World Tourism Organization 2003). Banff has benefited from this expansion and has become a world-renowned destination.

The 2003 Parks Canada Visitor Use Survey indicates that visitations to Banff National Park increased from 3.6 million in 1992 to 4.7 million in 1999. Since 1999 the number of visitors has remained level at the 4.6 - 4.7 million range, in part due to world events (September 11, 2001, SARS, slower economic growth in visitor origin countries). In Canada as a whole, spending as measured by international receipts decreased 10% in 2002 from 2001, although the number of international visitors increased by 2% in that same time (World Tourism Organization 2003). This decrease in spending has been acutely felt in Banff where higher spending international visitors have become an important part of the current market. Hotel occupancies in ‘Mountain Destinations’ (Banff, Lake Louise, and Jasper) have decreased from mid-70 percent (73% - 77%) in 1996-2000 to mid-60 percent (62% - 67%) in 2001-2003 (Alberta Economic Development 2004).

Based on forecasts from the World Tourism Organization, international tourism is expected to recover to previous growth rates evident prior to the uncertainty seen in 2000-2003. International arrivals are projected to climb from the current world total of 703 million to 1560 million in 2020; specifically in North and South America from 115 million in 2002 to 282 million in 2020 (World Tourism Organization 2003). This optimism is shared by Goeldner and Ritchie, “The expected continued growth is based on continually rising per capita incomes, lower travel costs, increased leisure time, and changes in consumers’ tastes and preferences toward travel, recreation and leisure goods and services” (2003:439). In the short term, tourism visitation is expected to continue; however, a growing number of people are aware that relatively inexpensive oil has been a critical enabler of tourism growth (Eagles 2005). As the supply of cheap oil decreases in the medium- to long-term, tourism could experience a radical shift to short-haul visitors (Eagles 2005). These international trends can be expected to increase visitor pressure on the Town of Banff and the Rocky Mountain Park system as a whole.
Although the market of potential visitors has expanded and appears poised to continue to do so, increased competition within the tourism sector may result in inconsistent distribution of the increased number of visitors. Competition has increased between tourist destinations around the world and Banff’s future success in this market, and its ability to shift towards a more sustainable tourism, will depend on its competitive position relative to other destinations.

Destination Competitiveness
According to Ritchie and Crouch (2003), for leisure travellers, attractions are the prime reason people travel and the combination of attractions is a key factor in determining competitiveness\(^\text{11}\). The ecological integrity of Banff National Park is critical not only for ecosystem health, but also for sustaining what is special about Banff National Park from a tourism destination perspective. The attractions that separate Banff from other tourism destinations are its landscape, natural biota, history and combination of wilderness and comfort; therefore, the preservation of these "attractions" is crucial to the competitiveness of Banff as a tourism destination (Ritchie and Crouch 2003).

In the past ten years, hotel room rates have increased in Banff as lucrative international (American, European and to a lesser degree Asian) markets have become an increasingly importantly portion of the Banff economy. In 1988, just 31% of visitors to Banff were from outside Canada; in 2000 the percentage had grown to 58%, although in 2003 it had decreased to 44% (BCIR 2004: 48). In the summer approximately 59% of visitors are international, while in the autumn this number rises to 64% (Parks Canada 2003). This is a double-edged sword as these high-end markets are no doubt able to provide higher rates of revenue without significant investment in levels of service, yet also represent a smaller section of the available market. This can be effective when business is good, but also leaves the destination more vulnerable to international fluctuations and perceptions (as evidenced after September 11th, 2001, and has been attributed to the SARS outbreak, Mad Cow disease, and the war in Iraq, (BCIR 2004)). Other communities have had similar market transformations and suffered: in a report identifying challenges to resort vitality in Aspen, Colorado ("Aspen Retail Analysis" 2003), one of the key observations of weakness pointed to a "narrow market niche". An additional concern with a shift toward increasing the international segment of tourism visitors is identified by Telfer who cites research by Archer (1978) showing "domestic tourism is a better

\(^{11}\) It is interesting to note that while typically not an attraction in the sense implied by Ritchie and Crouch, shopping is the most common activity of the approximately four million visitors to the Town of Banff - 78.7% all of visitors to the Town (Parks Canada 2003).
generator of local income than international tourism as it relies more on local sources” (2002: 59).

There are other important questions that arise with the pursuit of a narrow, yet lucrative, slice of the tourism visitation pie. It is useful to review the Core Vision of the Banff National Park Management Plan for “People from around the world participate in the life of the park, finding inspiration, enjoyment, livelihoods and understanding” (Banff National Park Management Plan 2004). One of the key difficulties in implementing National Park policies over the last 100 years has been the disconnect between tourism and the broad tourism objectives of the region (and country). While Banff National Park has a number of characteristics that make it different from other tourism destinations, the underlying planning and development should always seek to uncover what the goals, benefits, and costs are associated with any kind of tourism development.

**Sustainable Tourism**

These sort of broad questions are difficult for the tourism industry as a whole to consider. Visitor service providers in Banff are an amalgamation of small and medium sized businesses (hotels, restaurants, tour companies, etc.) that measure their success in terms of profitability and continued survival of the business. Small businesses tend to have a harder time reconciling short-term survival urgency with broader objectives such as quality of life for staff or encouraging low impact (heritage?) tourism. Similar to the theory introduced in the preface, it is difficult in the modern economy for an individual person or business to reconcile the impacts of their decisions on the greater scale of ecosystem health, community values, global trade, or destination competitiveness.

The tourism industry has tried to address some of these broad challenges and sought answers through sustainable tourism. Like any sort of sustainability, sustainable tourism suffers from the same vague and numerous definitions. Writing in the first issue of the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Bob McKercher (1993) identified some of the salient and pragmatic realities of Tourism, four of which are:

- Tourism is a private sector dominated industry, with investment decisions being based predominantly on profit maximization;
- Tourism is a multi-faceted industry, and as such it is almost impossible to control;
- Tourists are consumers, not anthropologists;
- Tourism is entertainment.
Stephen Boyd (2000) identifies this reality as having played out in tourism development of national parks despite heightened sensitivity to environmental degradation:

"However, the paradox exists in that while tourism may have emerged in this climate [of raising environmental awareness of the 1960's and 70's], it did not respond to these concerns or sentiments. Instead emphasis was on the promotion of mass tourism, the growth of ubiquitous resort development with little concern or understanding over impacts that tourism created even in national parks and similar areas” (Boyd 2000:163).

These are important realities to consider when one is theorizing about the potential role of business operators in Banff, what influence planners might have in affecting the tourism industry in Banff, the potential for prevalent heritage tourism, and the type of attractions that entice visitors.
Chapter 4 - Community Development in Banff

This chapter is intended to review social sustainability in Banff, specifically to understand some of the community development issues that interface with the tourism industry.

A Unique Community
On a worldwide scale of social development, Canada scores highly, ranking forth in the world according to the Human Development Report- this encompasses measures such as a long healthy life, knowledge, and standard of living (UNDP 2004). Banff generally is consistent with scores for the country as a whole, and compared internationally has a high level of development. Although Banff provides services and social conditions at a level consistent with most developed countries, particularly in the areas of health and education, it does have some unusual and challenging aspects.

The Incorporation Agreement between the federal government and the provincial government, effectively creating the Town of Banff, states that Banff is, "to serve, as its primary function, as a centre for visitors to the Park and to provide such visitors with accommodation and other goods and services" (Government of Canada and Government of Alberta 1990). Because the raison d'être of the Town is to serve the park and its visitors, the community structure is based almost completely on the service industry that supports the tourism economy. Residency in Banff is restricted to employees working in the park, a requirement called the 'need to reside'. This policy has been important in limiting residential development to a minimal level necessary for the local businesses and services and has enabled Banff to avoid the challenges of second home or recreational property ownership that are definitive in many mountain communities in western North America.

The Town’s social and economic profile highlights some park service centre characteristics that are unusual about Banff; I have summarized the key differences in five categories:
1. Youthful Transient population
2. Affordability
3. Social Capital
4. Safety
5. Recreation and Culture
I will deal with each of these matters briefly before discussing their impact on the community in terms of social capital.
Youthful Transient Population
Banff has an unusually large proportion of residents in the 20-24 age group, 18.3% compared to 7.2% in the province of Alberta. "Many young people from around the world flock to Banff for recreation and employment in the tourism industry, either seasonally or for a few years... The nature of employment opportunities in Banff results in a population that is heavily weighted in the 20-29 year old age bracket" (Town of Banff 2004). These youthful transients from around the country and the world bring energy, diversity and enthusiasm that both complement and challenge the town.

42% of Banff residents have lived in Banff less than two years. Looking slightly longer-term, still over half of the town (58%) has lived in Banff 0-5 years. One of the key challenges this provides is how to provide a meaningful experience for these people who tend to be "here for a good time, not a long time." This is summarized by a research participant in a study looking at the needs of young adults in the Bow Valley (Banff, Lake Louise and Canmore).

[Drinking and going to the bar] is such a big focus of people because a lot of people coming here are 18. That's legal in Alberta, and that's such an exciting thing. They've come from [other provinces] where they have to wait a whole extra year. They come out and have this wild and free lifestyle. Some people have left their parents behind and being in Banff is their first experience of being away from home, and they get to play adult. They don't necessarily play that game very well. (Cavicchi et al. 2002: 19).

To this end, The Town of Banff has supported some initiatives to provide tourism staff with recreation alternatives, informal support, and education opportunities.

Affordability
Although the Banff population is better educated than provincial averages, the median incomes are generally lower. Neither of these situations is surprising. The majority of visitors to Banff National Park have higher than average education levels, and so too do the residents. However, the median income in Banff is below average; typical of a place reliant on a large number of service industry jobs.

The affordable housing shortage is probably the most acutely felt ramification of the low income/high expenses pattern seen in Banff. An astoundingly low percentage of Banff residents own their residence, just 29.6% own, while 70.4% live in rental accommodation. By comparison, that ratio is reversed for the province as a whole where 70.4% own and 29.6% rent. This situation is partially due to the high cost of ownership; 2001 census data indicates the average value of a private dwelling in Banff was $372,865 in 2001, compared to $159,698 in Alberta. The large number of short-term residents and the high cost of housing have resulted in decreasing rates of ownership, "likely due to
the nature of the construction occurring and the building of units that are intended to provide rental accommodations" (Town of Banff 2004:16).

This problem is most dramatic at the lower end of the income scale, as 92% of renters making less than $20,000 do not meet the criteria for living in housing at affordable rates\textsuperscript{12}, and that only drops to 72% when considering those renters making between $20,000 and $39,999. Transient low-income workers are forced to accept any available accommodation and often live in substandard conditions, a situation that affects their quality of life and well-being (Cavicchi et al. 2002).

Despite the challenges of low income/high expenses, many people do chose to live in Banff and balance personal sacrifices out with some of the benefits of living in Banff (see Recreation and Culture that follows).

**Social Capital**

The Town of Banff 2004 Community Indicators Report identifies volunteerism as a key measure of community social health. Volunteerism, community organizations, and community involvement are a critical aspect of life in Banff. These people and groups are the backbone for many extracurricular activities and sports leagues for youth, festivals, cultural events, adult recreational opportunities, support for seniors, and a wide and diverse range of vital community services. The dedicated efforts and long hours contributed by these individuals and organizations make Banff a more interesting, meaningful, and kinder place to live. Measuring their full impact is critical because they are a vital part of the community fabric of the town. (Town of Banff 2004: 21)

This document doesn’t measure volunteer rates compared to other communities, so it is difficult to use a relative gauge of community health, but points to 130 community organizations. Recognizing the importance of supporting volunteerism, a Banff Volunteer Centre has been established to encourage and facilitate volunteer organization, membership, and participation. The Community Indicators Report does, however, recommend additional study of voter participation and churches and religious organizations as important, but under-studied, facets of community involvement.

Another indicator of social health is the notion of social capital. Larsen et al. define social capital as the ability to act collectively to address common problems; specifically, the "willingness to engage outside agents to try to solve neighborhood problems" (Larsen et al. 2004: 65). Research has shown a strong link between social capital and socioeconomic status, length of residency, and home ownership (Larsen et al. 2004). These are obviously important challenges

\textsuperscript{12} Affordable housing is that which can be achieved without spending more than 30% of income on rent.
for the Town of Banff as length of residency and home ownership rates are much lower than the provincial average.

Safety
Crime rates in Banff have decreased slightly from 1999 to 2003. The majority of crimes are theft under $5000. According to the Community Indicators Report, "Contributing factors to this problem may be the high proportion of youth, the number of tourists, the transient nature of the workforce, and the high number of non-related persons sharing accommodation" (Town of Banff 2004: 38). Substance abuse rates are higher than many communities, but this can be in part explained by the demographic profile of the Town. More importantly, there are concerns about the under-reporting of sexual assaults, "Several of the young women mentioned concerns for their personal safety in high density housing situations and the apparent lack of public reporting of sexual assaults" (Cavicchi et al. 2002:19).

Recreation and Culture
The recreational opportunities in Banff are almost without comparison in the rest of Canada. The omnipresent natural beauty, immediate availability of wilderness opportunities, and well-developed outdoor sports (hiking, skiing, mountain biking, ice and rock climbing, canoeing and kayaking, and camping) are important amenities that encourage many residents to make sacrifices in order to remain in Banff.

For a town of just over 7000 full time residents, the cultural opportunities are almost equal to the recreational environment. The Banff Centre is an arts, cultural and education facility that since 1933 has run a diversity of programs in the areas of Arts, Leadership Development, and Mountain Culture (see www.banffcentre.ca for details). It attracts performing artists that often stop on a circuit of cities with populations of 1,000,000 or more.

As an international tourism destination, Banff residents have consumer options that far exceed what is typical: a diversity of local and international cuisines, shopping, and spa opportunities. Tourism has also attracted a more diverse community in line with the visitors that travel to Banff (e.g. British, Japanese, German, French, Korean, Spanish); 17.3% of residents belong to a visible minority, compared to 11.2% of Albertans. Although the Town of Banff makes no special accommodations, 10% of residents have Japanese heritage.

Role of the Planner
Many municipal planners' range of professional engagement is limited to matters of land development. In some cases planners may also be involved in transportation, parks, economic development, and community development.
initiative. I believe that there is an important role for planners, as managers of change, to move beyond the traditional responsibilities and into matters of economic and social health.
Chapter 5 - Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research process and identify some of the limitations and advantages of the qualitative approach in this case.

The Need for Research on a No-growth System

There are very few examples of limits to economic development in the North American context. There are examples in other Canadian and American National Parks, but there are three critical differences:

1. Banff is a relatively large community compared to most other National Park service centres or towns.
2. Banff is somewhat geographically isolated - although Canmore 22 km to the east is a “gateway community,” it is experiencing its own resort/tourism pressures and has a fixed growth boundary as it is surrounded by provincial parks.
3. The Bow Valley is an important transportation conduit with trans-national highway and railway lines that run through the approximate centre of the park.

Carmel-by-the-Sea, California is often cited as a comparative to Banff, but that resort town is surrounded by another jurisdiction with considerably less regulation, and while there is much to be learned from Carmel, it is a different situation. The complex mix of history, geography, tourism and preservation combine to make the growth cap in Banff a unique situation. Like Carmel, Banff can provide lessons on tourism development, community development, municipal planning, and consensus building.

A number of documents have identified the need to plan for the post build-out environment: "understanding the impact of build out, approaching city status, and management of, and limits to, growth" (BBVS 1996b: 54); "Conduct a comprehensive commercial build-out analysis in anticipation of reaching commercial build-out in 2006" (Town of Banff 2002: 25); "How does the level of "uniqueness" affect the commercial viability of the town? Is this impacted by the types of businesses in the town (e.g. local vs. franchises)?" (Town of Banff 2004:62). Unfortunately, neither the Town nor the federal government have taken any initiatives to develop such a strategy. There is little research in a North American context that contemplates the implementation of a physical limit to commercial development. This is combined with Banff being unusual in a number of ways:

- A strong and well-established international tourism industry
- A relatively high degree of development within a national park
- A strong federal government regulatory presence
Despite these differences, Banff can provide a useful example and perhaps some lessons for dealing with a no-growth environment. It is clearly an example of assigning a higher priority to environmental protection than traditional economics and social well-being.

**Research Hypothesis**

The research hypothesis evolved from reviewing the tourism literature, being involved in the community as a resident for many years, and participating in many informal discussions. The basis of this hypothesis stems from the following causes and effects:

1. As build out is reached, assuming tourism demand continues to grow, the constrained supply will result in the ability for commercial property owners and business operators to charge higher prices.
2. This inflation may result in windfall profits for some, but will make the business environment more competitive.
3. Larger businesses, particularly national or international franchise operations, will be better able to function in the higher-stakes market. Conversely, smaller locally owned businesses will find it increasingly difficult to compete.\(^\text{13}\)
4. Locally owned businesses make three important contributions to local sustainability. They:
   a. have significantly higher economic multipliers for the local community.
   b. have the potential to provide uncommon or unique visitor experiences.
   c. contribute more to the social capital of the community because they have higher volunteer rates, less transient employees, and contribute to an enhanced sense of place.
5. The erosion of unique or uncommon services and opportunities in Banff will limit some of Banff's appeal as a tourism destination.
6. The erosion of local businesses will have increasingly compounding effects on the social capital of the community - decreased wage and income distribution to the local economy as some managerial jobs are centralised, lower volunteer rates will make the community less attractive, some of the defining characteristics of Banff may be lost to homogeneous corporate interests, and essential services for residents will be lost due to competition from high-end visitor services.

\(^\text{13}\) This assumption is in part predicated on the difficulty in financing businesses as lending agencies and landlords favour large corporations or franchise businesses that can absorb local costs or inconsistencies and present less risk.
This hypothesis presents a bleak potential scenario, and is admittedly uncertain with respect to visitor motivations. The continued growth of multinational franchise businesses will only occur if visitors and residents choose to patronise these businesses over local businesses. The hypothesis suggesting erosion of local businesses and downstream impacts on the community social capital is predicated on there being two kinds of tourists/consumers: those that prefer familiar, reliable and comfortable experiences, and those that seek unique or unusual experiences or destinations. Tourism theory suggests that having unique attractions is a critical component of being a competitive destination (Ritchie and Crouch 2003), yet visitor behaviour seems to support increasing numbers of franchise businesses in Banff (Tony Roma’s, Footlocker, The Body Shop, GAP, etc.)

Because of Banff’s reputation as an internationally renowned destination, it is fortunate to be able to attract a diversity of visitors. To test what impacts the growth cap may have on the type of visitor, the tourism experience, and potential implications for the community, qualitative interview research was chosen as the best methodology. The qualitative research was an important means to investigate what it is that individuals love about Banff, what fears they have of losing what they care about, and what their aspirations are for their future.

**Research Methods - Discovering the Banff Story**
Banff National Park and the Town of Banff have a complex history that is woven into a larger national drama. To understand where Banff, the Town and the Park, are today, it is critical to understand the story of Banff; in this case, this is “Story as Foundation, Origin, Identity” (Sandercock 2003). Sandercock suggests this methodology as particularly useful for understanding multiethnic and multinational histories; however, it is also relevant to this study as Banff National Park is certainly at a stage “in which conflicting notions of identity are at play” (2003: 17). Although the story of Banff is different for each person, my version of the story comes from living in Banff full time from 1985 - 1990, intermittently until 1997, and then through the secondary research described in Chapter 2. This was complemented with a summer job in the planning department in 2002, and many informal discussions with planning staff, business operators, citizens, family members (my mother still lives in Banff), friends, and a former Town councillor.

The primary research process furthered an understanding of the past planning processes and identified areas of concern that should be addressed by municipal planners in a post-build-out environment. I conducted eleven 30-70 minute interviews with a variety of stakeholders at a variety of locations in Banff and one in the neighbouring community of Canmore. The interviews were
semi-structured as a means to explore respondent's in-depth views about the
growth cap and perceived social and economic impacts on living in Banff after
the cap is reached. Although the small number of interviews in this study has
limited application for specific issues, the personal conversations provide rich,
in-depth information about value-laden perceptions of planning processes and
park management. This qualitative approach is critical to realise Van Herzele's
assertion, "that planners need to go beyond the identification of preferences
of physical features and uncover in some way the particularities of the
participants' "systems of meaning," which influence their ideas about what is
to be done" (2004: 210).

All interviewees were provided with the questions that formed the basis of the
semi-structured interviews. This was done to encourage some thought and
reflection on the community prior to the interviews.\textsuperscript{14} Semi-structured
interviews were used as a means to provide a basis of common issues, while
allowing flexibility in the depth of response to certain questions (Robson 1993).
The interviews took place from September 2004 -January 2005 and were
recorded and transcribed by the author. I selected interviewees to include a
diversity of opinions on the growth cap and perspectives on potential impacts.
Obviously, the interview subjects do not represent a comprehensive sample of
all potential interests, but do include diverse points of view.

In some cases I know the interviewees on a personal basis, but these
relationships are limited to personal relationships and at the time of the
research interviews I was not living or working in Banff\textsuperscript{15}. The personal
connection may have enriched the openness of discussion, and should not have
inhibited or manipulated the interviewee responses. The University of British
Columbia's Behavioural Ethics Review Board reviewed and approved the
interview procedure. I assured interviewees that though their comments may
be reproduced they would be anonymous. Typically, cited portions of
interviews are attributed to a member of a particular group or classification;
I.e. environmentalist, developer, businessperson, social worker. This research
has intentionally not used this technique in response to concerns that such
classifications are essentialist and may lead to assumptions based on the class

\textsuperscript{14} While there was a risk that some subjects would prepare more than others and skew the
results, almost all interviewees alluded to having thought about the questions prior to the
interview.

\textsuperscript{15} Thus I have hopefully avoid Robson's concern that "someone attempting to carry out a form
of enquiry into the situation in which they themselves are working or living may find that the
change aspects become virtually impossible to separate out from the enquiry itself" (Robson
1993: 7).
description (Jamal et al 2002)\textsuperscript{16}. In this way, I intend to respect the complex and sometimes contradictory personal values (see Chapter 6.4.c for more on contradictory values)\textsuperscript{17}.

Although I don’t want to prejudice respondent’s comments in the text, for the sake of understanding the research methodology better, the following rough categories may be used to describe those interviewed.

- Political interests - a councillor and former mayor
- Business interests - all are business owners/operators, two of which own/manage commercial property
- Citizens (with a strong preservation inclination)
- Community development worker
- Tourism non-governmental interests

It is worthwhile reiterating that almost without exception, the individuals interviewed share some traits that might be expected of other categories than the one indicated above (e.g. a business operator that made comments typical of the environmental conservationist perspective).

No tourists were interviewed due to limitations of time and resources. Insight to visitor perceptions of Banff would have been useful, particularly with respect to understanding the relationship between visitor experience and the services and attractions available. Unfortunately, an effective sample of visitors was not possible given the scope of this research, but would be worthy of further study.

**Research shortcomings**

Fear of loss (of community, of lifestyle, of home) is an important underpinning of reluctance to additional government intervention. In policy planning, fear can be difficult to identify and measure, especially quantifiably, yet tends to be the basis of participation in municipal planning processes. The ability of the planner to effectively understand and engage the qualitative existence of the community she or he serves is critical. The interview method was chosen to better explore the qualitative nature of policy impacts on a community. While

\textsuperscript{16} The essentialist theory expresses concerns over assumptions that all individuals belonging to a group or class share the same properties. As described by Jamal et al. "The connotation is roughly associated with the meaning of the term and provides its (essential) characteristics or attributes. These properties or characteristics are rigidly fixed. In an essentialist view, all terms must have these various features (except proper names, which we shall not discuss). The term thus confers "reality" on that to which it refers, in virtue of these certain (essential) properties that determine what it is (its essence)." (Jamal et al. 2002: 168)

\textsuperscript{17} I present a personal example of this where I highly value the protection wildlife habitat, yet occasionally mountain bike, run and hike in areas that may be sensitive, but are not subject to closures.
this method has advantages, there are two important shortcomings with respect to its narrow interview sample.

1. Long-term residents were exclusively interviewed. For example, every person interviewed is a homeowner, and that alone identifies them as part of the 30% of people that own homes in Banff. This illustrates the need for planners to more effectively understand and engage the transient portion of the Banff community.

2. 10% of Banff’s population is of Japanese heritage. While Banff is more than happy to court lucrative foreign tourists, there should be better recognition of this component of the Town’s population in the municipal activities. In the mountain tourism destinations of Colorado, there have been some initiatives to respect the large numbers of Latin American immigrants that are now a defining characteristic of these communities.

Assessment of Interview Data
I attempted to gain exposure to a variety of perspectives and opinions, using the semi-structured interview to allow the interview discussion to be guided by the respondents. I concede that personal biases are difficult to recognize and avoid when presenting an interpretation of the interview data, but have endeavoured to be explicit about these (Robson 1993).

Each interview was transcribed into Microsoft Word and then reviewed using categories based on the research hypothesis. This review yielded additional categories that were common between respondents and had been unanticipated. The additional categories were used in iterative reviews to search all interviews for relevant comments. The number of responses on a topic and my judgement of the relevance to the research questions were used to decide which responses are included in the following analysis. This evaluation is subjective and I have presented extensive quotations as a means of enabling the reader to draw their own inferences from the interviews.
Chapter 6 - Voices from Banff

This chapter summarises the recurring themes that were identified by the residents and workers in the interview process. Each citation is identified by the interview number to preserve confidentiality, but all references are consistent to identify the sometimes contradictory feelings.

6.1. The cap on commercial square footage was necessary

Many people interviewed enthusiastically supported the growth cap limit to commercial square footage. These people typically spoke of the small town atmosphere, proximity to natural environments, and the need to preserve what it is about Banff that people come to experience. Some of the respondents phrased this argument strongest by imagining an opposite scenario:

I think that over the long term, the business environment in Banff would be catastrophically affected if we continue to grow...we would wreck what it is that the business is here, which is giving people access to this kind of experience. [Interview 1]

No one interviewed spoke directly in opposition to the cap; however, some suggested that it would not necessarily achieve its goals or was redundant to existing land use zoning regulations that essentially had a similar effect in the downtown commercial area.

In the preface to this thesis I asserted that eventually humankind will need to reassess its relationship with the planet and the way we consume resources; the planet cannot support all of humanity living at current western levels of lifestyle. At the beginning I suggested that, at a higher level of analysis, the cap is a limit to growth, as discussed earlier. Two respondents (one with a strong environmental inclination and one that typically espouses the business perspective) identified the growth cap as inevitable for humankind:

But at the same time, and this is important, you know, mankind needs to stop growing. We do. Calgary needs to stop sprawling. It really does. And as I grow older and wiser I become more and more convinced of that. [Interview 7]

And so another possible assumption would be that business owners and members of the community would decide, "What the hell, we've got to figure something out here that the whole of humanity has got to figure out at some point, which is how to live without growing, and what better place to test that than here in a National Park. And to do that would by necessity require some degree of self-constraint. And so I can't say I'm highly optimistic that we will see that, but I'm also not prepared to dismiss it as... at least idealistically as a possibility. [Interview 2]

These comments suggest that a mechanism like the commercial cap was vital not just to preserve the environment in Banff National Park and to sustain the tourism industry there, but that the entire planet will eventually come to a
similar understanding of the need to preserve what it is that enables our existence.

6.2. The cap will increase prices - based on an anticipated increase in demand, yet limited supply.

Since 1950, when park visitation was 459,000 people, annual tourism growth through 1995 was 5.46%, resulting in 5,000,000 visitors in 1995 (BBVS 1996). This has corresponded with an increased capacity of the park to serve visitors as the provision of hotel beds, restaurants, and other service amenities have increased. Tourism growth has flattened or contracted in the last five years, particularly in Canada, but future predictions are for recovered growth rates (WTO 2003). Given the limit on Banff’s ability to meet additional demand with additional services, there is some uncertainty as to what will occur.

Two respondents suspected that the quality of service would decrease over time if continuously increasing numbers of visitors come to Banff while service capacity is fixed:

It also could be a situation where the visitor to Banff is not going to get the service that they want...So it could be that we could suffer well down the road with that fact that people are grumpy and not happy with what they get from Banff and so they’re going to go some place else where there’s a bit more choice and things like that. [Interview 4]

...if you and I are running in some event, and we go there, and there’s only one bathroom for a thousand people, it becomes a bad experience for us and we’re just not going to do that again. And it’s the same thing for Banff. If too many people started coming here, it would just become a bad experience for them. [Interview 5]

While there is no guarantee that visitor demand will continue to increase, tourism growth is predicted to continue in spite of some of the events since 2000. Accordingly, most people interviewed predicted results in accordance with basic economic theory:

Traditional economics would tell you that if there continues to be a demand and there is no more supply, the price of those things is going to go up... I think that in general the community will move towards a more high-end market. [Interview 1]

[1] It’s going to upscale the Town. It won’t be competitive for the lower cost sensitive tourist. Banff is going to become more expensive... But from a tourism business model, what you want to do is sell... not go cheap with high volume, you want to go like CMH, the heli-ski business, where you go very expensive with low volume. That’s where your margin is, that’s where your profits are. [Interview 7]

[1] It will drive the cost of land, or lease space up... So the whole point is that I think the commercial real estate cost will be inflated... out of control. It’s already happening. [Interview 9]
So you’re putting a limit on the supply of the product, but yet the demand continues to grow. So is there going to be price pressures on the Park? And inevitably the answer to that is going to be yes. [Interview 11]

However, one respondent put forward a contrary point of view with two lines of rationale:

I think it’s worthwhile being realistic that the supply restriction on commercial availability may not lead to an inexorable doubling of retail rents and equipment. Then if rent is to a business roughly ten percent of gross sales, that’s a good ballpark, that if that were to double, so it would be twenty percent of sales, you could imagine prices of products increasing by a little more than another ten percent here compared to something else… maybe it would be twenty percent… I think there’s enough supply in the various corners of hotels and other things, that dampen the pressure on retail rents that would prevent that. I think there’s enough supply in the neighbouring area, be it the regional market of western Canada or Calgary day-trippers coming up and saying, “Well prices are twice as high here or another 15%.” I think that would be enough of a dampening on prices. [Interview 8]

The assumption here is that Banff’s competitiveness as a destination is defined in part by its comparative position with respect to other Alberta destinations. This assumption is dependant on how the tourism market will evolve in the future; if tourism growth occurs, it is reasonable to expect that the high-end portion of the market will also grow, and therefore more people will be able to pay higher prices.

There is little incentive and evidence of scenarios where free market enterprises have maintained prices if higher prices are supportable by the market; a sentiment that was echoed by some interviewed:

I remember talking several years ago to the owner of a... I think they call it an outlying commercial accommodation, one of these lodges in the general area of Lake Louise. He was planning to increase his prices and his reason for increasing his prices was that he hadn’t met any resistance yet, and would continue to increase them until he met resistance. It had nothing to do with cost. I mean he wasn’t trying to cover costs or anything, it was just whatever the market will bear. [Interview 2]

And the challenge for a business-person in Banff has been the escalating rental rates... I don’t know what the justification for raising rents is other than just an opportunity. [Interview 3]

Why not if you’re a landlord? You can make more [money]. [Interview 7]

The overall sentiment was that prices are likely to increase within the Town of Banff and throughout the Park. Increasing prices start to impact accessibility and although this question was not specifically asked, some respondents did identify concerns.
6.3. **The National Park belongs to all Canadians, but only the wealthy may be able to afford to visit it.**

The wonderful system of 39 national parks preserves sublime landscapes and fascinating wildlife, but they are no longer a priceless, public trust. They are becoming a business with a marketing arm focused on wealthy 'clients.' They are becoming the paradise of the middle class. In this era of the $70 (Canadian) entry permit, parks must 'recoup the treasury.' And now more than ever, the 'doubtful class' of poorer Canadians can't afford the price of admission. (Marty 2002: 112)

If prices rise as anticipated, there may be a change in what type of people may be able to visit the Park. As discussed earlier in the review of Banff National Park's history, the earliest tourists to visit Banff were generally wealthy people from across North America and Europe. Banff has never been an inexpensive holiday option as the cost of services (food, accommodation, transportation) is a barrier to some potential visitors. As air travel has become more affordable and the western world has seen a rise in disposable income, Banff became more accessible to many people. However, concern was raised that a predicted price increase may result in a decrease of accessibility to all but the wealthiest of visitors.

And of course if prices do go up, we'll see an exacerbation of the existing situation where probably a fairly substantial element of the Canadian public is essentially priced out of this place; and yet it is to them that the park is dedicated. [Interview 2]

I've listened to some of the debates around this issue, some people are saying that the Park should be open for everybody, and everybody should come here, and these are National Parks, everybody should have a right to come, and we need to limit, and ecological integrity is our primary... all that kind of good stuff, yes, absolutely. But when you finish that sentence off with and that means that there will be a minimum of $500 a room night, well then all of a sudden that's not really an acceptable answer. [Interview 11]

In other words, visitors to the Park would be self-selected based on an ability to pay. Another respondent reiterated this concern less directly:

It's [the limit to growth] an opportunity to become quality of service rather than quantity, as I see it. And I’ve always felt that if we can improve our service and offer each individual a higher level of quality of experience, and when people have challenged me and said but you’re talking about a social economic [limit], your talking about limiting people’s access on socio-economic lines. And I have really always hoped that it would be on behavioural lines so that we wouldn’t price ourselves beyond what the average Canadian can afford. But that people would come here with a certain level of behavioural expectations... [Interview 3]

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18 It is important to note that the inflammatory choice of words here are not Marty's, instead he is quoting Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald (who was Prime Minister from 1867-1873 and 1878 - 1891).
The key in this last comment is that rather than economic limits constraining the potential visitor, it would instead be based on a behavioural criterion. This is predicated on providing types of experiences that would only appeal to a certain segment of the population. For example, few snowmobile enthusiasts visit the park, as there are no trails available for snowmobiling. In terms of addressing the current visitor profile, by limiting the potential for shopping and increasing the opportunities to learn about the Park, perhaps fewer people for whom shopping is a key motivation and measure of quality experience, would choose to visit Banff (note that shopping is one of the most common activities of visitors to Banff 78.7% (Parks Canada 2003)). One respondent specifically imagined this scenario:

I prefer to see us try to encourage a more environmentally sensitive individual to come here, not necessarily the party animal or whatever. It just seems that some of these ski areas, they just have to have a party every weekend, they have to have something going on every weekend to encourage people to come. And I don't think that that's the reason people should come to Banff. They should come to Banff for the environment and the experience, and the enjoyment of being in a place like this, and not necessarily have to have street parties and all that kind of stuff going on all the time... The growth cap would possibly complement something like that [the Heritage Tourism Strategy - an initiative to provide a visitor experience more in-line with national park values of education and conservation]. You know, people coming here to see the history might like to see a smaller town as opposed to a big sprawling town, and all that kind of stuff. That might be more in keeping with that type of approach as opposed to just trying to encourage just thousands and thousands and thousands of people to come because we've got all the stores and all the hotels and all the restaurants you could ever want. It being a slightly smaller town with less to offer might be more attractive to the environmental tourist or the historical tourist. [Interview 4]

The Banff National Park Management Plan (2004) also advocates this vision: The park will continue to offer visitors the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities that enhance their experience and improve their understanding of natural ecosystems and cultural heritage.

In the words of one respondent, the questions that should be asked are, "What is the experience that the individual leaves with? Is it a higher level of understanding?" One of the key initiatives in the 1998 Minister’s Communiqué (that also established the current growth cap) was to “enhance educational interpretive and learning experiences to the park and townsite visitors” (Government of Canada 1998).

As the private sector and residents within the town play a significant role in providing the visitor experience, their support for such a vision is critical in how successful its realization may be. To encourage certain behaviours and discourage others is a value-laden issue that questions the amount of management intervention park visitors, residents, and all Canadians are willing to accept. The Management Plan for Banff National Park espouses a vision for
the Park, but there has been little buy-in to a common vision by Banff residents and businesses. To address this disconnect, it is essential to develop a commonly held vision for Parks Canada, the residents and businesses in Banff, and the Town of Banff municipal government. This vision can form the basis on which future decisions are made and will provide the rationale for some difficult choices.

6.4. There needs to be a fundamental shift in the approach to managing the Town and the Park

When Tom Lee, Parks Canada’s Assistant Deputy Minister, told the Banff-Bow Valley Round Table that decision-making had failed in the Valley, he confirmed what the evidence had made clear. In public submissions, deputations, and Round Table discussions, people repeatedly emphasized that the current problems in Banff National Park were often tied to decision-making. (BBVS 1996b: 64)

6.4.a. The community of Banff needs the Community Plan review to achieve a community vision

... we’ve got to engage the Town into what it [the growth cap] means and how we can survive and put some positive spins on it instead of having continuing negative spin. [Interview 6]

Despite some past visioning exercises, the Banff community remains divided. There is an acute need for a diversity of stakeholders. Much of the animosity from both ends of the development-preservation spectrum is directed at the federal government, and specifically Parks Canada. The first step to moving beyond these deeply held positions requires a process that can create a broadly acceptable vision for the future. At its core, the Official Community Plan revision planned for 2005 should aspire to determine a collective vision for the Town within the National Park. It should address the type of community people want and the issue of build-out in relation to that vision.

The Town is aware of this need as indicated by this section from the 2002 State of the Town Report:

Provide more specific direction for the quality of experience that is desired for the town in order to maintain and enhance its image as one of Canada’s premier destination resort communities. The Banff Community Plan should be expanded to ensure that the desired quality of experience is achieved and that all future proposals, decisions or actions by both the municipality and private sector are measured against specific criteria (i.e. does it help achieve the vision for the town and for Banff National Park and/or reinforce Banff’s unique character and sense of place). (Town of Banff 2002)

The need for a common vision is critical as this clause refers to decision actions being “measured against specific criteria.” At this time, those criteria
remains undefined and more needs to be done to define “Banff’s unique character and sense of place”, and should be incorporated with the Community Plan review.

Numerous individuals interviewed responded to specific questions on the growth cap by stepping back and suggesting that the specific answer lies in an as of yet undetermined vision:

“What are those things that are important to us? What are those things that we’re going to say these are the things we’re going to protect and these are the things that we want to evolve, and here’s how we want them to evolve?” And I think we have to put some thought into that. And we have to put some thought in to how that looks. [Interview 11]

I don’t know how to do this [manage redevelopment after the growth cap has been reached], I just know what I think the outcome should be. And I know that the outcome that is desirable for me in terms of community values and ecological values, [and] that we can’t get there by conventional means. Are we as a community willing to take some of the risks that will be involved in that kind of grand experiment? I would hope so, but I don’t know for sure. [Interview 2]

"... if long-term people can’t resist the financial incentive to cash out and go elsewhere, I think that that could negatively affect volunteer rates and sense of community because I think it is the long term well established people who do that stuff." [Interview 1]

Having a collective vision will not necessarily retain long-term residents, but it can help to develop social capital defined as the “networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1993 quoted in Larsen et al. 2004: 65). The limit to commercial growth can figure prominently in this new vision, and should endeavour to be positive and inspiring. From Schellenberger and Nordhaus (2004: 31):

A positive, transformative vision doesn’t just inspire, it also creates the cognitive space for assumptions to be challenged and new ideas to surface. And it helps everyone to get out of their “issue” boxes.

Interview respondents echoed this call for an optimistic visualization of the future:

I don’t think there’s enough people that see it [being in a National Park and the restrictions imposed by the growth cap] as an opportunity, they see it as a restraint. They don’t think imaginatively enough. [Interview 10]

[It] [the growth cap] will ultimately be our selling point at some point in the future. It will make us a wonderful model and maintain the charm of the Town [Interview 7]

... and when it’s all said and done, I know I’m very lucky and spoiled to live here. [Interview 3]
Although Banff is already a recognized World Heritage Site, a successful international tourism destination, and a great community to live and work, the growth cap presents an opportunity to imagine a new relationship between the related interests of park ecological health, a healthy tourism economy based on park values, and a vibrant community that supports its residents.

And the question is, "Can we continue to offer experiences that are unique and are valued, and are worthy of driving demand or sustaining our communities?" [Interview 11]

I think this is one of the grey areas that the community, council elected representatives and administration, have to figure out a way in this next three years to start engaging community in discussions about how we survive in a no-growth but excellence service model for our visitors. [Interview 6]

It is critical that the vision process be inclusive and involves the greatest number and diversity of stakeholders; particularly the three groups traditionally in conflict with one another: 1) the business community, 2) environmentalists, and 3) Parks Canada. To implement a plan that does not include a sense of community ownership will inevitably lead to confrontation. Indeed, respondents often expressed frustration with past planning processes, which they felt did not include the community's interests.

It is somewhat discouraging to note that there was an extensive visioning process in Banff ten years ago. As part of the Banff Bow Valley Study conducted by the federal government in 1995 and 1996, the federal Minister recognised the importance of a vision as the foundation:

"We urgently need a common vision in the Bow Valley. But we cannot come to a common vision unless we work together. Whether we are environmentalists or business people, park administrators or concerned citizens, we will be more successful in working with interested parties and building upon our common ground, rather than becoming divided because of our differences."

There was an extensive process that formulated an elaborate vision (Ritchie 1999), and the visioning exercise succeeded in creating what appears to be a powerful vision statement. But, because not all stakeholders were supportive of the visioning process and final statement, the next stages were subject to criticism (Jamal 2004).

6.4.b. There needs to be a more participatory process to guide the project from vision to implementation

[Where you try and plan and impose your plan on other people, unless everybody is part of the plan, then it doesn't go. [Interview 3]
One of the difficulties for participatory planning is how to represent the entire Canadian public that has an interest in Banff National Park. Some suggest that to manage a public resource that belongs to all Canadians, limited public participation may be the only pragmatic way to balance the general interests with the specific interests of the local stakeholders (Thomas 1995).

The federal government, based in part on the report produced by the Banff Bow Valley Study, imposed the 1998 limit to commercial square footage. The Banff Bow Valley Study was based in part on input from a multi-stakeholder round table, which was much improved over the traditional public hearing format, but was not without its shortcomings (Jamal and Eyre 2003). It is difficult to determine how diverse the participating parties were, particularly as there are concerns that the tourism-business sector did not fully participate in the process (Ritchie, pers. comm. 2002). Hodgins and Cook (2000: 23) explained "The [Banff Bow Valley Study] Task Force faced many challenges in pursuing the objectives of the study but no greater one than engaging the business community."

It is difficult to say where the blame lies for this failure to fully engage one of the important stakeholders. Although overly simplistic, a review of the past processes suggests that certain groups may have held undue influence over the process and eventual implementation of plans:
- Banff Community Plan originally submitted to the federal government 1998 - Business (Interview responses and informal discussions).
- Revised Banff Community Plan as required by the federal government 1998 - Environmentalists (Interview responses and informal discussions).

There has been a long history of lack of collaboration between Parks Canada and business interests. Both business and environmental lobbyists have typically travelled to Ottawa to lobby higher in the regulatory hierarchy to move their agendas forward. The potential for this action to impact decisions has eroded the capacity of local regulators and discouraged participation by some groups in local consultations. For a process to transcend this history an event involving public speaking and airing of past frustrations, injustices, and stories, may be the necessary first step to allow relationships to heal - all parties need to acknowledge there was a problem with the past processes, including Parks Canada (Sandercock 1998).

There's going to have to be a lot of discussion with provincial and federal authorities, and I think especially federal authorities... the feds put us in this situation and they don't seem to have any ownership of the impact of it. And I really think the feds need to step up, or even be asked, I don't even know if they've really been approached on a lot of this, to partner, to make sure that those social impacts aren't as powerful as they could be, try and mitigate a lot of it. [Interview 9]
To move beyond the positional lobbying of these competing interests, a process needs to be designed where some critical stakeholders can be meaningfully involved.

The Town of Banff may be in a good position to assist in improving the participation by different groups in developing a management direction for both the Town and the Park. Traditionally, the business community has been reluctant to participate in the Parks Canada processes and have instead focused their energies on the Town government. Informal comments made to the researcher, suggest that there is a sense that the 2004-2007 Town of Banff Council is weighted towards a “pro-business” perspective. Although this council had not yet been elected at the time of this interview, one respondent had concerns about the role of the elected officials in planning processes:

... it’s extremely important that the community as a whole, not delegate that kind of planning and decision making authority to the business community. And we tend to do that. And there are reasons for it, often a whole variety reasons. Many people in the business community, or at least some of them, tend to be strongly self-motivated. They’ve got the kind of personality that is built for that kind of engagement, and some of them have the means to have the time to spend on that sort of thing. But I would say in many cases that tends to leave us with a decision making body and processes that are defined by, or driven by, a fairly narrow spectrum of the community. [Interview 2]

This clearly calls for the Town of Banff, Parks Canada, and other key stakeholders to usher in a new period of collaborative planning as a means to address the long-standing competitive approach to decision-making.

Parks Canada has been moving towards a more participatory approach (Banff National Park Management Plan 2004), but there are still strong feelings of an autocratic decision making process. The primary public consultation in matters of Park management is an annual public forum to “review and discuss the implementation of the plan” (Banff National Park Management Plan 2004). The annual public forum has not been considered particularly successful as one interviewee expressed:

...the Bow Valley Study came to an end and so did that, and one of the things that Parks Canada, in some pathetic way, seemed to think they were doing, was they put together this annual planning forum. And then in typical fashion proceeded to treat it not as an accountability session, but as a public relations exercise that we’ve been really critical of them over the years for. And year after year I’ve said that, They bring the roundtable back together, or at least the multi-stakeholder group, and everybody has their five minutes of fame, where they stand up, and that’s the process. And so it tends to be a rhetorical exercise. You’ve got five minutes, you’re hoping the media’s there so you’re going to hammer as many points as you can; and I’ve been saying to Parks Canada for years, “You’ve brought these people together, why don’t you give them a problem to solve, and make them work... make us work?” And there’s just been a reluctance to do it. [Interview 2]
This interviewee makes an important proposal. Although not in the same words as Habermasian communicative rationality (Flyvbjerg 1998), the suggestion to “give them a problem to solve, and make them work... make us work” seeks to create a situation where people can work together and learn from each other as individuals, not stakeholders representing an ulterior position. This allows the “human social life... based upon processes for establishing reciprocal understanding” an opportunity to transcend traditional conflicting positions (Flyvbjerg 1998: 212). As described by Hibbard and Lurie (2000: 194), “The essence of the communicative approach is to create conditions under which a genuine collaborative dialogue can occur around issues that are critical to the members of a community.”

This discursive space cannot occur in the confrontational public hearing arena and instead should be crafted in a smaller group and with the assistance of a facilitator. Even the Round Table format used in the Banff Bow Valley Study was not sufficient at creating effective communication:

- business and environmentalists were perceived to hold different values as foundational to their existence... But little to none of these crucial thoughts or values were expressed at the table, at least not in a form that allowed for a meaningful discussion of the environmental participants’ beliefs, values and desires (their interests) with respect to protecting the park’s ecological spaces. (Jamal 2004: 361)

Jamal et al (2002: 172) describe an, “interactive, learning-based approach to planning under conflict that allows new, shared meanings to be formed by the participants.” Further theoretical suggestions come from Jamal’s reflection on the Banff Bow Valley Round Table:

- building ‘common ground’ is an activity of social construction rather than merely ‘discovery’ of common interests and values. The challenge, it would seem, is not which interests are ‘real’, but rather to design a process that enables meaningful dialogue, debate and learning about the issue(s). (Jamal 2004: 374)

The potential for learning is indicated in this respondent’s admission of a changed understanding:

- [The growth cap] will actually make us more attractive. And initially I didn’t agree with that, but gradually I’m warming up to it more and more as I think it through; it will actually enhance and benefit us as a town. [Interview 7]

A process that supports this kind of sharing and learning is certainly ambitious and some caution should be heeded before entering into the process; Hibbard and Lurie (2000) offer pragmatic suggestions based on a process that was significantly longer and more expensive than anticipated, in large part due to the lack of carefully planning the process at the outset:

1. Set some limits of what the process may or will not be able to solve. For example, if provincial tax structure is an important issue, be explicit that that is beyond what is possible within the scope of the process.
2. Create the opportunities for dialogue. Large-scale public hearings may be efficient and seem to get a lot of contentious viewpoints to the surface, but does dialogue occur and have opportunities for learning been easily available? This is a critical component that is often underestimated.

3. Be clear about where the decision making authority lies - do not create false hopes that a decision made around the table will necessarily be carried out if there are other levels of approval that still need to occur or legal challenges that may make something difficult or impossible.

An additional suggestion made by Margerum (2002) is that any planning process will have to have sufficient resources devoted to it, as resources are often cited as a major inhibitor to reaching a meaningful outcome, even more so than historical conflict between stakeholders. This statement is both hopeful and implies caution; optimism that positional entrenchment can be overcome, but also that a failure to allocate sufficient resources may establish false expectations and doom a process before it has even begun.

This collaborative planning process will not be easy, but it is necessary to maintain consistency with the vision derived at the beginning of the process. Returning to the community’s relationship with tourism development, Timothy (2002) contemplates a form of tourism development that is based on community empowerment. This model calls for the community to take a leading role in both “public participation in decision making” and “resident involvement in the benefits of tourism.” Although the Town of Banff’s position in a national park and the primacy of ecological integrity supercedes a foundation of tourism with the objective of community development, these are still important steps in ensuring fairness to the residents that do live in Banff (and other national park communities).

The Banff Community Plan scheduled for 2005 is critical; there is a risk of “planning process fatigue” similar to the situation described by Lurie and Clark (2001: 205, and Hibbard and Lurie 2000) in Teton County, Wyoming, “If another public process is carried out without learning and improvement on the part of all participants, further loss of trust and involvement is possible.” The Banff Bow Valley Study was successful at providing a process for learning between some stakeholders and seems to have improved stakeholder relationships during the course of the task force:

The public involvement, shared decision making and addressing the issues throughout the study allowed for inclusion of public concern and support. This has given people involved in the Banff-Bow Valley a voice and a power they did not have before. This must be carefully nurtured if conditions are not to return to the fractious behaviour of the past. Parks Canada will have the responsibility to ensure that this nurturing takes place. (Hodgins and Cook 2000: 37)
The interview research here has shown that the successes from the Banff Bow Valley study have not been "nurtured" and past "fractious behaviour" is as evident as at the close of the Banff Bow Valley Study; thus a critical recommendation has been missed.

6.4. c. Individual stakeholders hold diverse and sometimes contradictory values
A number of individuals interviewed expressed conflicting or contradictory points of view.

I think the businessman should be able to buy and sell his business... I certainly don’t think the government should get involved with that kind of stuff,... they should keep their nose out of it as far as saying who can buy and who can sell and what you can put here and things like that. I know there is a great temptation for them to have their two cents worth as to what type of businesses come to town.

BUT, the same respondent also said:
... it [visitor experience] depends on the type of stores and Banff is kind of a neat place. We’ve had a real rash of these big city stores lately. We just saw that Foot Locker just opened up down the street, and it looks so out of place in Banff. I drove by it that other day at about 9.30 after I closed here and the lights were bright and shiny. They were the only store open on the street. [Interview 4]

I could see a day where Canmore’s a zoo and people come for the daytrip to Banff to get the nice, more small town European quaint feeling. We’ve got some work to get there, but I could definitely see Banff becoming that place. And maybe the commercial cap, whether it’s this arbitrary one or whether it’s the defined borders, helps us get to that place. You know, because it forces us into it.

BUT, the same respondent also said:
I mean, we can’t get too idealistic about certain planning within this commercial cap. [Interview 5]

Appropriate use is probably a good idea, but to date the Town has simply done a horrific job of designing and implementing it, and a lot more thought needs to go into it.

and
I think the biggest problem with Heritage Tourism is Parks Canada itself... Parks Canada is completely failing at their job.

BUT, the same respondent also said:
We think it’s [Banff] way advanced in its regulatory model. Way more than any other municipality anywhere. [Interview 7]

... about managing commercial uses, part of me, from an ideal point of view, in terms of what our community needs, I feel like the Town should have a stronger role and should be able to step in and say you know, “We’re only going to have five gift shops, and once you have those five, we’re not having any more.”

BUT, the same respondent also acknowledges:
The other thing is if you end up having too much intervention... the whole reason people get into business is because,... a lot of people who work for themselves, it’s about second guessing need and feeling part of that success and making a business
successful. And if you’re having this huge amount of intervention, does that take away from the other businesses... well, it’s not a fair competition any more. [Interview 10]

Finally, another respondent struggles to determine the right amount of town intervention in their own mind:

there definitely needs to be regulation in terms of controlling large multi-nationals coming in, but the Town needs to within that allow some free market, so that companies locally owned, aren’t totally feeling regulated all the time, because they already do... The Town should try to preserve as much of a free market as they can, so staying out of that would be really important. And I think maybe a symbol to local business that they’ll support them in areas where they need support, but not delve into areas where they may not need it. [Interview 9]

A better process is critical to creating discursive space where learning can occur and some of these internal paradoxes can be explored further.

Van Herzele (2004: 201) describes a scenario where “non-professional reasoning” is used to inform professional expectations in a planning process for a local park:

An informal setting was created, giving participants freedom to raise their issues and to pursue their ways of thinking. Interaction in such a diverse group was used to encourage a wide range and form of understanding, to facilitate the expression of ideas, to illuminate different perspectives through debate within the group, and to involve citizens more actively.

As discussed toward the end of Chapter 2 there is a high degree of scepticism about public processes and implementation of plans. Professional planners, policy makers, politicians, and local stakeholders can all benefit from facilitating discussions that may illuminate a broader epistemology:

Careful attention should be given to the conditions under which local knowledge may become explicit. People in small groups talking to one other in their own words, in their own ways, are most likely to develop shared understandings while uncovering the taken-for-granted assumptions that underlie their apparently "natural" understandings. (Van Herzele 2004: 210)

6.4.d. A long term “referent” organization is recommended to guide implementation

The film trilogy *Trois Couleurs* (Bleu, Blanc and Rouge), written and directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski, includes a recurring scene that describes our need for closure: an elderly woman walks slowly down an urban street carrying a bottle to a recycling container. She is small and age has hunched her. As she stops at the recycling container, she reaches to the opening to push the empty bottle in. The opening is high and she struggles to push the bottle all the way in. In the first two films of the trilogy, the bottle becomes wedged in the opening, as she is unable to push the bottle in far enough that it drops. In the third film the scene repeats itself, but this time she receives assistance from the
protagonist and the bottle drops into the container - a very satisfying moment for the viewer as finally there is some closure to the woman's efforts.

While there is no closure per se in a planning process, the bottle dropping can be seen as a rough parallel to implementation of a plan. When the bottle doesn't drop, the viewer is frustrated and may wonder why this scene was included in the film. Similarly, when a plan or report from a planning process fails to be implemented or is different from perceived outcomes, the future relationship between government and public is harmed (Hibbard and Lurie 2000). Thus commitment to implementation and effective monitoring are essential parts of any agreement and addresses the third component of collaborative plan making, implementation, as described by Margerum (2002).

The Banff - Bow Valley Study Task Force was cognisant of this important issue, and one of the key recommendations reads:

The [Banff Bow Valley Study] Round Table’s Vision is a good start at consensus building; to be truly successful it must continue. It should be integrated into the park’s own processes and should have national support. (emphasis added, BBVS 1996a: 16)

Unfortunately, implementation decisions have happened largely without consultation (Jamal and Eyre, 2003). This is particularly disappointing as one of the 14 "Key Task Force Conclusions" was:

Public scepticism and lack of trust in the decision-making process has led to polarization of opinion. There must be an overhaul of the development review process. We are also recommending new forms of broader based public involvement and shared decision-making, with clear links to Parks Canada's decision-making and clear accountability. Such involvement will address national, regional, and local interests. (BBVS 1996a: 12)

The failure of not achieving this essential recommendation, while other recommendations of the Banff Bow Valley Study have been implemented, has resulted in further erosion of relationships19. Residual discontent from the Banff Bow Valley process and its implementation, which included the current growth cap, was evidenced in many of the interviews:

It goes back to my original point that it [the growth cap] was very politically motivated... [Interview 5]

the fact that it [the cap] was pushed as a tool to accomplish a means of protecting ecological integrity by reducing human use, it hasn't been widely accepted by the community. And I think that's important because when something is announced from Ottawa, when something goes through public consultation locally, and that public consultation isn't either considered, or have strong enough influence on decision making, that you alienate the community with that decision and this is viewed quite

19 (see Kim and Mauborgne 2003 for more on the importance transparent decision making)
broadly as a political tool to appease the environmental lobby, so it won't actually do anything... [Interview 9]

I guess one of the things that bothers me about feeling that that positive result is possible is that it's a result [the cap] that we didn't choose as a community. We should have, but we didn't. That doesn't change the fact that I think it will be good, but I wish we'd been capable of collectively getting there on our own. [Interview 2]

...that sort of dictatorship style decision making [the federal government imposing a requirement for a reduced limit to new commercial square footage], not elected by the people, not from the people or for the people, that trying to implement something that got a lot of press and a lot of coverage and a lot of praise from the environmental lobby, that was already being done. It's not only a political tool in that sense, but it's like an insult to the capacity of the Town to do their job too... [Interview 9]

The Banff Bow Valley Study recognized these relationship issues and did make some recommendations on the issue:

In facing the challenges of the future, Parks Canada and commercial enterprise will have to modify their somewhat stormy relationship. A new, cooperative relationship must respect Park's Canada's role, purpose, and mandate. For its part, Parks Canada must work harder to understand the challenges of operating a business and must consult with the business community to avoid the problems associated with surprise decisions. (BBVS 1996b: 55)

One of Boyd's key recommendations for managing tourism in national parks is based on "forming of new institutional relationships between government, industry, and destination communities" (Boyd 2000: 166). Jamal and Eyre suggest a formal "referent organization" that would embody these "new institutional relationships" to counter inconsistent governance and improve implementation, specifically, "to aid policy makers and planners with ongoing decision making and management of Banff National Park." As noted in the interview comments earlier, this organization should be more than an annual review and should have input on more specific policy applications: "give them a problem to solve, and make them work... make us work." [Interview 2]

This group will require resources, but continuation at this stage is crucial to completing the process. As indicated by the intensity and consistency in interviewer responses regarding process, there is a wide gap between deeply held values and what different groups and individuals perceive to be being implemented (Jamal and Eyre 2003). This referent organization will allow public input to ensure that the implementation is consistent with values that formed the basis of the vision and Community Plan, as well as adding a degree of flexibility - something identified by one respondent:

If anything, the best thing would be to keep yourself flexible... you've got to be adaptable to current conditions and what's going on in the community. [Interview 9]
This flexibility is necessary to adapt to changing information, understandings and external forces (Jamal et al. 2002, Cormick 1996).

Regardless of what the 2005 Banff Community Plan review yields, a referent organisation is recommended for all matters of Town of Banff management. Planners should play a key role in establishing this improved relationship in the long term:

Planning and policy professionals instead can be a key part of a self-organizing process that brings together agents, enables information to flow, builds trust and reciprocity, represents interests, connects networks, and mobilizes action (Booher and Innes 2002: 232)

6.5. Government intervention isn’t necessarily a bad thing.

So all of a sudden they are mucking with the free market, which is against the sort of pioneer, economic model of the market dictating. [Interview 7]

The role of government intervention is perhaps the fundamental point of contention in this study and is intrinsic to the nature of the planning process. Lurie and Clark aptly described this as the:

inherent tension between allowing the market to be the mechanism that shapes and shares values and an understanding that government intervention is necessary to protect greater community values against the unbalanced distribution of values caused by market failure. (Lurie and Clark 2001: 204)

I argued in the Preface of this thesis that government intervention will eventually be required to protect the environmental foundation crucial to life. Regardless of whether that is correct or not, many of the interviewee responses in this research addressed the question of government intervention; many with particularly strong feelings of aversion, resentment and fear of further “interference”:

I think the businessman should be able to buy and sell his business... I certainly don’t think the government should get involved with that kind of stuff, they should keep their nose out of it as far as saying who can buy and who can sell and what you can put here and things like that. [Interview 4]

I get concerned when the Town gets involved in anything. [Interview 11]

The Town should try to preserve as much of a free market as they can... [Interview 9]

And don’t frigging think we’re going to let the Town do it [be involved in the management and improvement of the visitor experience] because we don’t have any confidence at all in them. They’re just going to issue more parking tickets.... That’s certainly a sentiment out there. [Interview 11]

I think, to tie in something like appropriate use, I suppose a communist central planner might say, “Well we only need this much commercial use because we only need these
kinds of businesses here.” But in practice, it just doesn’t work that way.” Appropriate use is too much of a grey area for one thing. And if you try and dictate what should or shouldn’t be in the limited amounts of commercial space, I believe you’ll end up with a lot more empty spaces than full spaces. If you meddle too much, you create economic uncertainty and cause ten effects that you didn’t anticipate in solving the one that you did want to. I think that that may tie in. I mean, we can’t get too idealistic about certain planning within this commercial cap. [Interview 5]

I was part of the delegation to Town Council saying I would love to see some sort of commercial design for our downtown where we would have a certain percentage that’s food and beverage, and a certain percentage that’s hotel/motel and mixed housing...It went nowhere and I thought philosophically about that, if we could approach it in a planned way. But in a free market economy that’s driven by economics... I guess it was a bit socialist, I don’t know; where you try and plan and impose your plan on other people. [Interview 3]

There is clearly a strong resistance and scepticism regarding the role of government. Despite these feelings, there were also acknowledgements that some of the current government initiatives and requirements are actually having a positive impact on the community:

... the Town partnering with young families to enable them to be in the housing market has been extremely successful and I think we may need something like that again.” [Interview 1]

I’m quite proud of the regulatory model that exists here. It’s been put in a rather draconian fashion. Banff has gone kicking and screaming into it and wouldn’t have done it on a voluntary basis, but at what point should we be attempting to celebrate and welcome it. And that may be our greatest virtue. [Interview 7]

...if you actually sat down and thought about it, you’d realise that Banff would not be the community you enjoy now if it didn’t have that. And lots of people in Banff talk about how Canmore is going to be terrible when it grows bigger. And they don’t realise the only reason they can say that is because of the growth cap and the need to reside. [Interview 10]

So, a store like this may not be able to survive if the rents continue to go up and up and up and up, and so there could be some real ramifications for that. [Interview 4]

So yes, maybe the Town’s authority needs to be expanded, because now you’ve put in restrictions against the market model. [Interview 7]

...it’s hard for people to step out from the ideology of “government must be bad for independent business” and turn around and say, “Governments have set new rules of the game that allow the business to operate well.” Now, there are lots of examples where, not the situation of the captured regulator, although there certainly are arguments for that around here in other things, but rather the securities industry would never work without the government watchdog in the system of securities to keep them fair and honest. So there’s lots of ways where you have government regulating businesses to the betterment of business, and those businesses that are aware of that
don't usually complain. A lot of people though respond not with the depth of understanding of how government and businesses might relate, as just with a knee jerk reaction government must be bad if government is setting some regulations. [Interview 8]

Should it be the natural [economic] forces or what's right for the community? And part of me thinks that because Banff is so unique you can step out of the box and do something that is really really different because we are in such a unique situation. [Interview 10]

The strong resentment of government intervention is understandable - it is largely based on fear of loss, especially loss of control over what is important to people. Yet, planning typically seeks to correct for "market failures" in accordance with community values; and results in inevitable power dynamics between various municipal, political, community, and business interests. Many stakeholders understandably have fears of government intervention leaving them powerless. By engaging a different kind of participatory planning process as proposed in previous sections, Banff residents will be able to expose their presuppositions and their fears; this is an important step towards envisioning a community and type of tourism that is in line with their aspirations. In some cases this vision may include some forms of additional government intervention; but the critical distinction is that rather than being proposed or dictated by a higher level of government, any intervention would come from the residents of Banff, perhaps with the municipality as the enacting agency. In fact, there are already many examples of such "interventions", for instance, design guidelines, special taxes or levies, and numerous limits on development through land use zoning. Although not related to sustainability per se, more recent use of government intervention has been used to limit the size of private homes in situations where they are deemed out of scale with existing neighbourhoods (Szold 2005).

As discussed, future management actions will be most successful if the 2005 Banff Community Plan update is based on a process that enables quality discourse, learning, and long-term thinking between the participants (residents, visitors, business operators, the Town of Banff, and Parks Canada). Specific interventions may not be clear but the interview process has suggested a number of areas of concern that need to be addressed. The primary issues are as follow:

6.6. Specific Planning Department recommendations.
6.6.a. Appropriate Use / Essential Services need to be defined and protected.

You take essential services, there's zero thought gone into that. Seniors housing... all that stuff. So without a doubt the Town needs to step up. It'll be controversial as hell, without a doubt. It'll be really tough stuff for a municipality. [Interview 7]
...So a difference between approved use and appropriate use and I think that that whole issue will be more of an issue after the growth cap is reached because then every space that is approved for a particular use means that another use, perhaps more needed in the community, won’t be able to find space. So, I think the Town is going to have to sort that one out. [Interview 1]

So, a store like this may not be able to survive if the rents continue to go up and up and up and up, and so there could be some real ramifications for that. [Interview 4]

You know, you’re controlling the amount of retail space so the landlord is just licking his chops. He can’t believe it. He’s going to be able to double his rent and have people lined up to get it. So you know, you can’t have that and putting everyone that’s been in business for twenty years in Banff out of business because of all these new highfaluting rents, and things like that. [Interview 4]

Supposedly there was a Ripley’s Believe it or Not wanted to open in Banff and the Town Council and I think the Parks as well, didn’t think that was a type of business [which is appropriate for the National Park]... which I know a lot of people would agree with, but it’s just ... the basic theory of it that the government is deciding what we should have in this town and shouldn’t have, and you’re much better off to let the market decide that. So those kinds of things I don’t think that any businessman should be held at a disadvantage because of the limited growth. [Interview 4]

Appropriate use is really tricky for people here to talk about, and I think it deserves fuller discussion and needs to have some discussion also with the commercial realtors.... Appropriate use suggests that there’s a clear boundary between what is appropriate and what is not appropriate, rather than grey areas more or less appropriate. So just as in social science people like to avoid answers that are either yes or no and prefer answers that are highly desirable, desirable, not so desirable, highly undesirable. It would be better for there to be four part thinking on what is more appropriate, highly appropriate and not appropriate at all and have a four part scale to in order to discriminate between them. Then I think we’d get better, more loose, more fluid thinking in our minds. And then I think we could start moving there, so that appropriate for the goals for the National Park, consistent with the management plan, where the businesses are encouraging people to enjoy the national park and understand the national park a lot more. Although, I think that would be a good thing to move towards. [Interview 8]

I would like to think that we could accomplish that in a way that is fair. I mean I’m not advocating sort of large scale expropriation of whatever businesses are deemed to be inappropriate, but it seems to me that if we had a clearer understanding of, or general acceptance of a vision, I suppose of what this place could be, then we might be more prepared to distinguish between those businesses that contribute and those that don’t. [Interview 2]

From the Banff National Park Management Plan (Parks Canada 2004):

"Parks Canada and the Town of Banff are both responsible for making decisions about what type of use is appropriate in a national park. In cases where the National Parks Act, Parks Canada’s Guiding Principles and Operational Policies, the Park Management Plan or the Town of Banff’s Municipal Development Plan are not clear on appropriate
use, these authorities must rely on more subjective criteria in coming to a decision. Compromise may be necessary at times and the review process must be flexible enough to accommodate changing public values and perspectives."

The concept of appropriate use in Banff stems from the primary objective of the park to be preserved for future generations enjoyment. Within that objective, human activities, enterprises, and impacts should be limited to those services that 1) minimize impact on the “ecological integrity” of the region, 2) are in accordance with Park values (which implies reverence for nature and educational opportunities related to Park systems and history); and 3) provides quality psychological (visitor satisfaction) and economic (visitor expenditure) opportunities to as many Canadians as possible. On one hand the notion of appropriate use seems specific to a national park; however, land use zoning, which allows or prohibits different uses, effectively does the same thing.

Although not identical, another criterion for determining appropriate use relates to the notion of basic and essential services. The National Parks Act limits commercial development in the National Park to those services necessary to provide the basic and essential services required for visitors and recreation within the park (Parks Canada 2004).

### Appropriate Use Criteria (Parks Canada 2004)

1. **Impact on Environment** - seeks to assess the extent to which the proposed change impacts the ecological integrity of the region. The assessment will include the effect of participation in the activity as well as the facilities and services required to support the activity.

2. **Effects on Culture and Heritage** - seeks to assess the qualitative dimension and preservation of a use that contributes to the region's heritage and cultural integrity. The assessment will reflect an understanding, appreciation of, and respect for the region's culture and heritage, and the evolving cultural identity.

3. **Quality of Experience** - investigates the extent to which the participant's and other's quality of experience is enhanced or diminished as a result of the proposed change. Its application recognizes that different visitors seek a broad range of different experiences, and that they value different resources, facilities and services in different ways.

4. **Economic Effects** - attempts to understand the economic effects of the proposed change. Issues that would be considered include: cost for visitors to the park, cost and revenues to Parks Canada, and effect on local, regional and national economies and market conditions.

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Jamal et al. has written on the problematic use of the notion of ecological integrity, suggesting that it can mean different things to different people and its indefinable nature makes it subject to misuse or hijacking by select interest groups (Jamal, Stein, and Harper 2002).
5. **Public Safety** - used to determine the extent to which the proposed change imposes risks or dangers to participants or others.

6. **Equity and Access** - seeks to ensure that all citizens have a fair, reasonable, and equitable opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, the range of appropriate activities and experiences available in Banff National Park. It will consider such factors as economic status, physical capabilities, and place of residence of the visitor.

7. **Social Effects/Quality of Life** - examines the social implications of the proposed change. Questions applied here would speak to: level of change to the region's existing social patterns and needs, effects on the social service structure, effects on social indicators (e.g., income distribution, housing costs, levels of crime, etc).

8. **Education and Awareness** - focuses on the extent to which the proposed change contributes to better understanding and appreciation of natural and cultural heritage, Banff National Park, its role within the Canadian National Park System, and its role in the larger ecosystem.

9. **Level of Use: Frequency, Timing, and Quantity** - would involve questions such as: How often does a proposed activity occur? When does it occur (e.g., season)? How many individuals are involved? What is the level of support required?

10. **Physical Setting Related** - has two components. The first focuses on whether the proposed change is well-suited to the physical setting of Banff National Park. The second considers to what extent the proposed change is dependent upon a national park setting.

(Derived from the Banff-Bow Valley Study Round Table Summary Report, 1996)

Although the Banff Bow Valley Study discussed this topic of essential services fairly thoroughly, there has been little action in terms of policy discussions until the beginning of 2005 when the new Mayor of Banff, John Stutz, broached the issue with respect to the growth cap:

"The one thing we want to make sure that we do is provide the appropriate and essential services for our residents and visitors and I'm not sure that we are providing all of those... What constitutes essential services is probably one of the questions that has to be answered." (Winks, 2004)

It is unfortunate that in the years since the current growth cap was put in place, there was little-to-no discussion on the matter of essential service; the community had no vision on the topic. Each year, approximately 3,975 m² (42,788 ft²) of development rights were being allocated, with no consideration for essential services. Now that the growth limit has been reached, the Town

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21 The exact amount of developed square footage is somewhat unclear. The 2002 Banff State of the Town Report identifies the need for this to be done: "Conduct a comprehensive commercial build-out analysis in anticipation of reaching commercial build-out in 2006. This would include an analysis of the planning, land use and development implications of build-out." This has not yet been done, and although not quick or inexpensive, the results of such analysis may yield additional development potential that the Town could allocate within a community evaluation framework based on essential and appropriate use guidelines.
is interested in addressing the matter through additional square footage. This lack of foresight is particularly sad given the discussion on this topic in the Banff Bow Valley Study:

Since it involves services provided to both visitors and residents, defining basic and essential facilities and services is fundamental to the future of Banff as a tourism destination. It requires an urgent, public debate to reach a possible consensus. Much of the debate will focus on value judgements because park policy offers only limited guidance in this area. (BBVS 1996: 251)

Both appropriate use and essential services are value-laden issues and may be difficult to find consensus on. One of the policy foundations for the Banff Bow Valley Study was that defining basic and essential services "should be based solely on visitor needs" (BBVS 1996: 252). Based on this determination, the BBVS went on to suggest:

Emergency services, basic financial services and some limited family and social services, such as daycare, that must be located in the Banff Bow Valley, could be considered essential for residents. Other services - e.g., dental, legal educational services, and non-emergency hospital and medical facilities - need not, and should not, be located in the Park. Those that now exist could be consolidated outside the Park as they are due to be replaced or as leases come up for renewal. Convenient access to services for residents is not a criterion for providing services in the Town of Banff. (BBVS 1996: 252)

Clearly this is a statement that would generate strong feelings among Banff residents. This has not been the model of defining basic and essential services in practice, and it would likely face strong resistance.

There are two ways to move forward on such an issue: 1) the decision authority may choose to support such a notion and begin to enforce this policy regardless of what the response is from residents, 2) the decision makers can engage the residents and explain the rational for the policy, and invite residents to form part of an implementation team on how this policy would be enforced. The second option is clearly more ambitious, time consuming and potentially risky, but, recalling the important process recommendations from Hibbard and Lurie (2000), it is important to explain what is and what is not on the table for discussion. If the issue of basic and essential services is to be dealt with, and with the assumption above, given the option for either Parks Canada to implement the policy, or the community to be involved in how the policy is implemented, without a doubt the community would want to play a role in defining basic and essential services - even though they may not agree with the assumption.

And perhaps having involvement of the affected community would make possible ideas that may achieve Parks Canada's objectives, but provide additional alternatives for the impacted enterprises.
6.6.b. A transfer development rights system needs to be established.

As I write this in early April 2005, the transferability of development rights (TDR) issue is receiving considerable attention in the Town of Banff. Town Council is considering a Land Use Bylaw amendment that would allow unused development rights (that were received in the Town’s development allocation draw since the year 2000) to be transferred from one property to another, as long as those properties are under the same ownership (Winks 2005).

The research provided no clear recommendation to the concept of a TDR system, as there was a mixed reaction in the interviews. It was strongly advocated as a means to more efficiently and completely use the existing space, but not exclusively:

The sale of redevelopment potential to so-and-so down the street, I think, would be unwise. At the very least, that kind of transaction would have to be approved by the Town, and would have to meet the Town’s needs. If there was some reason why it would be nice to have building X extend more than you might expect, and lock up the redevelopment potential of building Y maybe, but I think this kind of trading of rights doesn’t work well. I can’t think of a situation where it does work well, so just based on that I’m saying it makes me nervous.” [Interview 1]

There was a diversity of responses for what, if any, the role should be for the Town in a transaction that transfers developable square footage from one site to another.

I think the town’s role is more administrative. I think that market forces would clearly indicate where commercial square footage would optimally be used. [Interview 5]

YET the same respondent also suggested:
The town has to look at it [transferability] from their perspective and say, "From a land use perspective, what’s the best thing to happen?” [Interview 5]

The Town needs a system of development rights immediately to consider transferability between different developments (not even properties) - the values and vision need to guide that... a moratorium in the interim? [Interview 7]

I think it would make sense for there to be a market for transferable rights for two reasons. One I think there would be a smaller market, exchange of property or developable assets than people might think, but it would reduce the friction between business and government, and give people a reason to think about trading them amongst themselves instead of complaining about the government. So I think it’s more important for people to get in the mindset that they can start making deals with other property owners, and have some fair mechanism of exchange of that. So I’d say it’s a really sensible thing to do. [Interview 8]

I think that the Town should have a minimal say in it... when it comes to a transfer, absolutely not. Because at the end of the day, they, the Town, has not put a lot into how things are currently allocated, whether things are appropriately allocated, as we
speak. So for them to turn around and say, "Oh but now we’ll tell you how to trade and work within this cap." [Interview 9]

To explore what type of market and how to transfer it and how to... I think that deserves some fuller thought. There would still be the regulations that if you have a retail store and you want to convert it to eating and drinking, you have an intensification of the housing requirement, so that’s easy to imagine regulators handling that. And thus an incentive to convert all retail to all eating and drinking will be restrained by the business, over supply of restaurants would restrict that quicker than a regulator would restrict that, so I don’t think that’s too much of a concern beyond the intensification of the residential requirement associated with it. I think there’s a distaste that some people have in their minds about the thought of trading commercial developable rights in the same way there’s distaste in people’s minds over trading pollution rights.

[Interview 8]

Again this points to a process where as large a number as possible of different individuals should be involved in discussing the implications associated with a number of self generated options. This should include a number of "stakeholders" (e.g. commercial land owners, business owners, tourism officials, Parks Canada representatives, Town of Banff representative), but ultimately should be checked against a community and park vision statement as a means to incorporate broader and longer term values.

There needs to be some kind of check regarding questions like, “Does the transferability of development rights facilitate a "better" kind of tourism as defined by the local community with regional and national consideration?”, “Would transferability enhance or detract from community health?”, and the requirement that, “The transfer of development rights should have no net impact on the ecosystem health as compared to the existing development rights allocation.” The issue of transferability is before council now which points to the need to realise a community vision as soon as possible, as it is the foundation for future processes.

The mechanism of transferring development rights may have an additional usefulness in preserving Banff’s Heritage Buildings.

6.6.c. Heritage buildings need stronger protection.

I suppose the only thing where I suppose it [transferable development rights] does work well is in the preservation of heritage buildings. And that might be a good thing because I think the pressure on heritage buildings will be pretty intense. [Interview 1]

While I hesitate to propose a possible solution to the issue of transferability of development rights discussed above, the fact that the issue was brought up in the interviews does point to further discussion on this proposal. Yet again, it is worthwhile to return to the fundamental community vision. In this case, the
question is to what degree does the community, tourism industry, park objectives, and broader historical community value designated "heritage buildings" within the Town of Banff.

The interview data indicates that a number of people have strong feelings about preserving heritage buildings, and that greater effort should be made in terms of preservation.

Well I think we’re already seeing change; just from the marketplace itself, of still... a lot of people interested in coming to see that historic and heritage tourism concept as well as the viewscapes. [Interview 4]

I think there’s enough pressure on heritage home pricing to wipe out most of them as it is. So I think we’d then see one of the stories of Banff being demolished from within by housing pressure. [Interview 8]

That said, heritage tourism is a less developed market of the tourism industry, and may require more commitment and effort than the existing tourism development focus. Reaching the growth cap may present an opportunity where Banff can focus on a narrower niche of an expanding tourism market that is more in line with the heritage tourism values of the National Park.

6.6.d. Franchise business restrictions may be considered (or some other means of encouraging locally owned businesses).

Although this was one of the key hypotheses of the researcher, only one of the interviewees had clearly consistent answers in line with the theory that the growth cap may cause an increase in franchise or chain stores (and ensuing downstream impacts on visitor experience and community erosion):

I believe that if we become a town of multinational corporations, it will hugely damage our ability to be competitive, because people come here to have a unique experience and the whole point of multi-chain corporations here is that you are no longer unique. You’re shopping in the same stores that you’d shop in wherever downtown across the world. If there’s a way to manage that, if there was some type of strategy implemented where we do make a concerted effort to keep small businesses alive, then I think by the cap itself in terms of keeping us small, and keeping us intimate with our visitors we’ll increase our competitive nature. [Interview 9]

Specifically, when you look at programs that are leading the way in terms of affordable housing and programs for their transient workers, they’re all being sponsored by locally owned business because I think they have more of a handle on the reality of the situation. They have more empathy for what’s going on out there, so that motivates them to reinvest back in their community. So I think that’s a huge thing. In terms of programs and funding, as we move towards more multi-national corporations, we’ll see less funding and putting back into the community programs... [Interview 9]
Other respondents had some similar notions, but were less clearly articulated:

[A]re we going to keep doing things the way we've always done them, or are we going to do them differently? But I would say it would be at least as much an effect of the way we manage the development of the business, and if we choose not direct it, and that tends to be the way we deal with it, then I think we end up there anyway. Whereas if we choose to direct it we choose to... there will be obviously sort of your standard right-wing ideological objection, but if we choose to design this part of the park and this community that is here and the experiences that this community is providing to visitors, which is our reason for being here, then maybe it's time to be more interventionist. [Interview 2]

[This respondent lives in Canmore] We have lots of company that come and stays with us, and normally they go to Banff once or twice. It's not like somewhere that's a real eclectic mix of really nice local stuff. It's the same stuff everywhere you go. [Interview 10]

In contrast, some interviewees expressed reluctance to the Town determining appropriate or essential services:

I've seen, when we use the Intrawest of Banff, CP Hotels or Fairmont, so when that the Banff Springs tries to control its visitor's experience, and I guess in practical terms it doesn't work... it smacks a little bit of something that's not quite right. [Interview 3] [here the respondent is discussing how the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel took over control of all retail stores within the hotel, and after it did not achieve the desired results invited external retailers back]

I mean, I like the ma + pa shop. But the average visitor, they like a brand. It's not to say that a visitor won't respond to a well run ma + pa shop, but I don't think you can dictate, that this is what you're going to have for visitors. Because once again you'll end up with more empty shops than you will full shops, if you try to over regulate that. [Interview 5]

The alternative to government determining what is appropriate and/or essential is the free market (as some of the interviewees seem to prefer). But it seems that if the market were allowed to operate freely on this issue, it would primarily be the rents that would determine which services come and go. Thus large chains may be able to out bid small local businesses. The problem with this is that the large chain businesses may not actually be an essential service, but may be able to afford to locate in Banff due to their successes elsewhere. And if one assumes that people want a unique experience in regards to services in Banff, perhaps the threat of big brand stores taking over is somewhat scary.

This interviewee expressed the important point that demographics may have a greater impact beyond those that might be attributable to the growth cap:
I think it'll be hard to tease out changes of ownership or changes of leasing based on the build out, and the reason being there's a... I haven't ever done the estimate, but there's a 60 year old plus group of property holders in the commercial properties in Banff that will have to plan succession in the next ten or fifteen years, and that will be happening around the same time as people are understanding and realizing the results of build out. So the degree to which those people, as they start to sell, find that their pricing of leases change, and that that changes the sorts of tenants that are around Banff. I think that will have a bigger effect than the build out. [Interview 8]

Clearly there is a diversity of opinions on this issue, and the issue has been identified in the Town of Banff Community Indicators Report (2004:64) as needing further research. This confirms the need for a deeper level of discussion where the community can explore its aspirations. One respondent neatly summarised the need for the community as a whole to decide what its goals are in relation to potential franchise business restrictions:

I would challenge us to say, "If we do have flag ships that come in here, how do they embrace the look and feel of our community? How do we have stores that are aligned with the exterior look and feel for what we want - in terms of our visions for community? So again, I say the brand discussion, the big name, big box retail discussion is up here [gesturing], on look and feel. It's not about if you have a GAP or not. It's not about if you have a McDonald's or not. It's about what kind of experience are we providing to people? Are we meeting people's needs, from a community perspective as well as from visitor perspective? And are we offering authentic experiences that embrace National Park values? [Interview 11]"
Chapter 7 - Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter summarizes the main themes identified in the interviews, proposes conclusions, makes recommendations for future governance approaches, and then suggests issues for further research.

Themes

The role of the government

"The world is no longer divided by the ideologies of 'left' and 'right,' but by those who accept ecological limits and those who don’t."

This theme emerged in the research when one person being interviewed that I suspect would be viewed as being "right of centre" confirmed Wolfgang Sachs assertion in the previously cited quote:

But at the same time, and this is important, you know, mankind needs to stop growing. We do. Calgary needs to stop sprawling. It really does. And as I grow older and wiser I become more and more convinced of that. [Interview 7]

I hope I have been clear in my own assumption and values to this point; first I accept that there are limits to what the earth can support, and second, society is going to have to make some hard decisions about the way we live and govern ourselves. There are two ways that this transition to sustainability can occur, self-directed or imposed. Again, Bill Rees' description of the move to sustainability as "mutually agreed upon mutual coercion" is appropriate here. The question is to what degree is the mutual coercion mutually agreed upon. In the case of Banff National Park, particularly the amount of commercial growth within the Town of Banff, the federal government felt it necessary to step in and impose a limit, clearly a top-down non-participatory decision (though one that was arguably necessary). In this sense, Banff provides a useful example of a case where the unregulated free market has been detrimental to the local ecosystem and a higher body had to intervene.

In addition to the comment above, another interviewee also believes that growth needs to be limited, and although he was speaking about Banff National Park, it is relevant to the broader Canadian and western perspective:

I don’t know what else we might do here that might incur the wrath of the federal government to the extent that in the broader Canadian interest it would choose to step in. But, I would hope that that can be avoided. [Interview 2]

The interview research indicated great frustration with the seemingly dictatorial decisions being imposed by the federal government on the town and
community of Banff. However, despite exasperation over the process, most respondents also generally accepted that the commercial growth cap is not necessarily a bad thing and that reaching the growth cap may present opportunities to shift the Banff to a different model of tourism. If it is accepted that the growth cap is a good thing for Banff, the challenge for the future is how to manage planning processes that increase the likelihood of the community arriving at “good” policy decisions based on a foundation of sustainability; something that may require greater government intervention, but is conducted in a manner of partnership rather than dictatorship.

Community contradictions and learning
As the Town of Banff embarks on a re-write of its Community Plan in 2005, an improved system of engaging the public needs to be embraced. Traditional public processes (open houses, closed door non-governmental lobby groups, questionnaires, etc.) fail to enable any substantive learning. This failure is critical as almost everyone interviewed espoused occasionally contradictory opinions. This underscores the importance for creating “discursive space” where individuals can be themselves and explore their inner feelings, investigate their values, challenge their beliefs - ultimately create the opportunity for listening, learning and testing. Some would argue that it is the failure of planning to address this situation.

I imagine this “discursive space” to have the following general characteristics:
- groups of 8-15 people self selected to discuss a topic or issue;
- participation would not be premised on belonging to a category;
- participants would not be representing external interests;
- participants would be free to express potentially sensitive feelings and values;
- a clear understanding of realistic potential outcomes would be expressed at the beginning.

I do not anticipate a single group, or a single format. Participants could meet at various informal settings (in private homes, at a community meal, at other community events) or could have more structured meetings in community halls or conference rooms. These discussions could be facilitated and may consider using graphic representations to communicate ideas. There are numerous "tools" available for engaging local communities and as a result no single method is prescribed here. Instead the key to success is based on achieving the characteristics listed above.

The results from these group discussions would then need to be synthesized by a process manager (either a consultant or planning department staff) identifying key issues, consensus directions and key areas where agreement
could not be reached. The results of this synthesis would then require iterative reviews through broader community consultation (e.g. open house, web based feedback, community display).

This is a challenging scenario to imagine, as these criteria rarely exist simultaneously in existing planning or municipal processes. An improved process is critical if the Town of Banff, Parks Canada, and Banff residents are to transcend previous process conflicts. A better means of interaction is essential, and planners can play an important role in creating the setting for this to occur.

Relationships
The relationship between Parks Canada, Banff (Town and Park) business operators, Town of Banff administration, and environmentalists has continued to be defined by argumentative posturing, positional declarations, public criticisms, legal battles, and general confrontation. The central conclusion of this thesis is based on a changed relationship between these parties to enable a different future. I propose an on-going multi-stakeholder roundtable to act as an advisory body to the federal government and Town of Banff.

It is both fortunate and unfortunate\(^23\) that the Banff Bow Valley Study arrived at a similar conclusion, as previously quoted:

> Public scepticism and lack of trust in the decision-making process has led to polarization of opinion. There must be an overhaul of the development review process. We are also recommending new forms of broader based public involvement and shared decision-making, with clear links to Parks Canada's decision-making and clear accountability. Such involvement will address national, regional, and local interests. (BBVS 1996a: 12)

> In facing the challenges of the future, Parks Canada and commercial enterprise will have to modify their somewhat stormy relationship. A new, cooperative relationship must respect Park's Canada's role, purpose, and mandate. For its part, Parks Canada must work harder to understand the challenges of operating a business and must consult with the business community to avoid the problems associated with surprise decisions. (BBVS 1996b: 55)

The continued lack of resolution to this matter of relationships is significant for Banff, and without progress on developing improved institutional relationships, there seems to be little hope for achieving understanding, vision and action toward sustaining the ecological economic and social health of Banff. Perhaps the Town of Banff could even champion some of these initiatives to the federal government.

\(^23\) Positive in terms of confirming some of the findings of this research, yet negative in that there has been no progress on the implementation of this vital conclusion.
The roundtable as envisioned does not necessarily require what would be an unlikely devolution of decision-making power from the federal government, but instead needs a commitment to a better quality of public participation where higher levels of decision makers would also be open to improved understanding and learning. Again Hibbard and Lurie’s recommendations are important that the roundtable participants be clearly and honestly informed about what the roundtable will and will not be able to affect.

The advisory roundtable proposed could be modelled on a similar successful Advisory Board in place in Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba:

This management plan for Riding Mountain National Park (RMNP) is unlike any other national park management plan. It is different because it has emerged from a new approach to public involvement.

Parks Canada initiated a round table consensus approach in developing the plan in order to improve public involvement and to find new ways of resolving long standing issues between the Park and its stakeholders. (Parks Canada 1996)

Four working groups (ecological integrity, culture, recreation, and marketing and tourism) advise the roundtable, which in turn makes recommendations to the responsible Minister. Although the recommendations are important tangible results, the real benefits are that the roundtable provides a framework for continuous communication, learning and problem solving. Such a relationship does not exist in Banff between relevant stakeholders and could include the following key parties:

- Parks Canada
- Town of Banff
- Banff Lake Louise Tourism
- Business Groups
- Conservation/Environmental Groups
- Cultural/Heritage
- Recreation User Groups
- Transportation/Infrastructure
- Members at Large

There are two critical goals for the roundtable as suggested to achieve. First, the business and tourism sectors must be fully engaged. This has been identified as one of the major shortcomings of the Banff Bow Valley Study (Hodgins and Cook 2000), and a source of weakened relationships with resulting implementation of recommendations.

The second goal is to move toward transparency in decisions relating to Banff, both within the Town and the National Park. I am not proposing that decision-making power lie with the roundtable, but that planning and implementation decisions would be first discussed by the roundtable. The opportunity to
discuss issues in a well-facilitated group will enable open communication and learning to occur between the participants. This transparency is crucial for gaining support for the difficult decisions that will need to be made in moving toward sustainability.

Role of the Planner

It will be a challenge for planners to deal with the ramifications of the growth cap and to reconcile the bureaucratic requirements of their jobs with the broader societal, social and economic realities. Writing in the final chapter about his (non) credentials for writing his book, *The Geography of Nowhere*, James Howard Kunstler writes, "I had no particular credentials for the job, which proved to be an advantage, since so many problems with our everyday environment are caused by the over-specialization of trained specialists unwilling to look at the bigger picture beyond the narrow purview of their specialty" (Kunstler 1996). This is important counsel for planners to be more than land managers, design critics, or cogs in a bureaucratic wheel. To facilitate the above recommendations, planners will need to move audaciously into the field of community engagement where consultation becomes the foundation of creating a place for interaction and learning to occur - so much more than a mandated minimum. In the words of Campbell, the role for the planner is "to arrange the procedures for making decisions" (1996: 306-307).

Too often the municipal planner is left in a reactionary position responding to proposals by private consultants or other departments outside their "specialization". Instead, I assert that the planner should play an active role in the community they plan for, be honest about their own assumptions, and facilitate discussions among the diverse cast of community players that create the story of place. It is only by listening to and experiencing the messy reality of the community that planners can escape the myopic specialization that Kunstler chastises. Instead they need to evoke the "power of dialogue and narration to facilitate meaning-making and sharing" (Jamal and Eyre 2003: 435).

Fortunately the 2002 *Banff State of the Town Report* recognizes this need to some degree, although does not refer to planners specifically:

Expand and enhance the goals and objectives related to Tourism and Economy (Section 4.8) of the *Banff Community Plan*. The town must respond to increasing competition and a changing marketplace. If Banff is to continue to rely on its reputation and repeat business to sustain itself, much will depend on the quality of experience provided and the ability to maintain an experience that is unique to Banff. There are opportunities for improvement as well as some significant issues to address such as improving public amenities, improving signs and way-finding, and providing a well maintained, clean, safe and user friendly environment for both visitors and residents alike.
Planners are uniquely situated to be the resource that Gill (1996:639) recommends: a representative “who is knowledgeable about community planning and affairs is essential in order to explain issues, existing policies and past events.”

Suggestions for further research
I have written extensively on the need for municipal planners to utilise more effective processes for exploring community fears and desires and the importance of improved relationships with external stakeholders. There are some examples (Van Herzele 2004, Gill 1996), but more research is needed on pragmatic ways to achieve this within the constraints of the existing municipal structure, or perhaps more atypical solutions.

As noted previously in the research shortcoming, there was no representation from anything other than long-term residents. Transient workers are difficult to engage in traditional planning processes, but are a portion of the Banff population and should be better recognized. Similarly, this research failed to represent racial diversity of Banff, particularly the 10% of the population that is of Japanese origin. Future research should attempt to consult with these groups that are almost always under-represented in municipal planning.

There has been extensive research on sustainable tourism (Eligh et al. 2002, McCool and Moisey 2001, Bosselman et al. 1999, Ritchie and Crouch 2003), some of it questioning whether such a thing is possible (McKercher 1993, Boyd 2000). Further research into successful and innovative partnerships in managing the complexity of public lands, private enterprise, and heritage tourism could provide a basis for establishing the institutional relationship between stakeholders in Banff National Park. This relationship building is crucial for creating a foundation that any kind of “sustainable tourism” will need to be built upon.

Finally, this research has relied on a small section of personal interviews with conclusions being drawn from qualitative data. The depth of discussion would have been unlikely to be adequate for quantitative methods, yet "Qualitative data is often hard to synthesis and organize into a useful format, and frequently reflects the bias of the individual structuring the data" (Gill 1996:637). Further research on how the planner uses qualitative epistemologies in practice would enrich the quality of public participation and encourage better support for planning processes.
Works Cited


