



Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Policy

Policy Number: PD-003

Date in Effect: July 8, 2025

POLICY STATEMENT

- 1 This policy identifies the scope, content and process for developing an EIS. This policy applies to all EISs required to be prepared for the Town of Canmore.

PURPOSE

- 2 The purpose of an EIS is to provide sufficient information to the Development Authority or Council, where applicable, so that an informed decision on a Proposal can be made that balances land use, with the preservation and enhancement of natural areas and ecological features. An EIS describes the existing conditions of the Proposal area, identifies natural and environmental features, determines the nature and scale of the potential impacts of the Proposal and identifies how best to avoid or mitigate those impacts.

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DEFINITIONS

- 3 In this policy:

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- a) "Cumulative Impacts" as described in this policy are intended to ensure that the impacts of the Proposal are not considered in isolation from other developments or plans in the area. Cumulative Impacts are intended to be on a scale appropriate to the level at which an EIS is prepared. For example, an EIS that is submitted for an ASP should consider the Cumulative Impacts of the proposed ASP along with the neighbouring areas. This contrasts with an EIS prepared for a specific site development which may only be required to incorporate the neighbouring properties in the cumulative impact assessment;
- b) "Development Authority" shall have the same meaning and regulation pursuant to Section 1.13 of the Land Use Bylaw. Council shall be the Development Authority where specifically noted in a Direct Control Land Use Bylaw.
- c) "Proposal" means any planning related application, including development and subdivision permits, statutory and non-statutory plans and/or amendments, and land use amendment. A Proposal may also mean a Town of Canmore led capital project.

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REQUIREMENT FOR AN EIS

- 4 An EIS shall be required to be prepared and submitted in accordance with the Town's Municipal Development Plan and/or Land Use Bylaw.

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- 5 An EIS must be prepared, signed and stamped by qualified environmental professionals regulated in Alberta, such as a Professional Biologist. For section(s) of the EIS that may fall outside the scope of practice of a qualified environmental professional(s) (e.g. cultural and/or heritage reviews) the professional(s) must note that their sign-off and stamp does not apply to those sections or elements. No environment related sections of the EIS can be excluded from the sign off and stamp. 205-2025
- 6 All costs related to the preparation of an EIS shall be at the expense of the applicant.
- 7 In accordance with Section 17, all costs related to the Town's third-party review of the EIS and EIS Terms of Reference shall be at the expense of the Town of Canmore. 205-2025

EIS TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 8 An EIS must be tailored such that it is appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the Proposal being evaluated. Typically, large or complex Proposals will require more detailed and extensive research and analysis to develop the EIS than simple or small Proposals. To ensure that the Development Authority or Council, where applicable, has sufficient information to inform the decision before them a Terms of Reference shall be created. The Terms of Reference for an EIS shall be developed by the applicant and their qualified professional(s) and submitted to the Planning and Development Department. The Terms of Reference prepared by the applicant will be reviewed and accepted by the Planning and Development Department and the Town's Third-Party Reviewer. 209-2018; 205-2025
- a) Development of the Terms of Reference: A Terms of Reference for an EIS shall identify the information and issues that need to be addressed in relation to the Proposal including the site and study area. All Terms of References shall start with the contents of an EIS listed in section 9 of this policy. This list can be reduced, added to or modified as needed and accepted by the Planning and Development Department and the Town's Third-Party Reviewer to ensure that all of the information needed to make an informed decision on the Proposal are included in the EIS. The Town will hire a qualified professional(s) to provide input into the Terms of Reference submitted by the applicant and conduct an independent third-party review of the EIS. Notwithstanding the above, the requirement for an independent third-party review of an EIS does not apply to any EIS prepared by or on behalf of the Town. In such cases, the Town shall work with the EIS consultant to develop the Terms of Reference. 209-2018; 205-2025
- b) Terms of References where there are multiple studies conducted as part of a Proposal: In some instances, other studies (e.g. transportation impact analysis, slope stability) are prepared as part of a Proposal. Where there is overlap of scope, the Terms of Reference for the EIS may be modified to remove items from the scope that are covered by the other studies. Any recommendation related to environmental impacts covered in other studies should be included in the EIS.

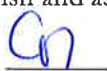

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- c) Terms of Reference where previous studies have been completed: In some instances, previous studies have been created regarding the subject land or Proposal. Relevant issues will still need to be covered in the EIS, although it is possible that a previous study may meet these requirements. The applicability of previous studies will be evaluated as part of the EIS process. 205-2025
- d) Alterations to Terms of Reference: Where the Terms of Reference are for an EIS related to a Proposal(s), the EIS should be deemed complete by the Planning and Development Department when it addresses all items identified in the Terms of Reference. Alterations to the Terms of Reference should only be required in situations where new information or issues arise pertinent to the Proposal that were not considered when the Terms of Reference was prepared or where the Proposal has been altered substantially from that contemplated when the Terms of Reference was created. 205-2025

CONTENTS OF AN EIS

9 In accordance with 8(a) above, the following is a sample of the issues that typically require evaluation in an EIS. This forms the starting point for developing a Terms of Reference.

- a) Proposal Overview:
 - i) A description of the Proposal.
 - ii) Mapping of the Proposal in relation to existing site conditions and constraints.
 - iii) Identify and describe the applicability of federal or provincial regulations, requirements or restrictions relevant to the study area, and describe how the Proposal will meet the intent or legislative requirements.
 - iv) An overview of the planning policy context, including statutory documents and zoning. 205-2025
- b) Existing Site Conditions – a description of existing environmental conditions, including, but not limited to:
 - i) Site location map with identifying features that show the location of the Proposal site in the Town.
 - ii) Historical air photos (dating back to 1950 where possible, focus on surface water, wetlands, land use changes).
 - iii) Soils, landforms and surficial geology.
 - iv) Hydrological or hydrogeological resources including surface water (ephemeral and permanent drainage patterns), and groundwater.
 - v) Fish and associated habitat.

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- vi) Wildlife and associated habitat.
 - vii) Vegetation and wetlands (including wetland classification).
 - viii) Wildlife and plant species of concern.
 - ix) Air quality.
 - x) A biophysical inventory and analysis of environmental components to be completed, with surveys to be undertaken during the appropriate season(s), and a discussion of each component's relationship to the local and regional ecosystem.
 - xi) A summary description of the natural features and valued ecosystem components, and the proposed criteria to be applied for evaluation of their significance.
 - xii) Spatial and temporal boundaries used in the EIS.
 - xiii) Hazards and constraints resulting from existing site conditions. 205-2025
- c) Existing Site Conditions – a literature review of previous relevant studies of environmental components within or surrounding the Proposal site.
- d) Analysis of Impacts:
- i) Analysis and criteria for evaluating the foreseeable short, medium, and long term positive and negative impacts of the Proposal with respect to fish and associated habitat, vegetation and wetlands, wildlife and plant species of concern, soils and terrain, ground water, surface water quality and quantity, and air quality. 205-2025
 - ii) Specific analysis of the human use impacts resulting from the Proposal.
 - iii) Analysis of alternatives and modifications to the Proposal to reduce, avoid or mitigate impacts. 205-2025
 - iv) An evaluation of whether the form of the development/Proposal can be accommodated given any identified ecological sensitivities or constraints, including land use type and intensity of the proposed development.
 - v) Analysis of the Cumulative Impacts of the Proposal considering the impacts of adjacent developments.

- e) Mitigations, Residual Impacts and their Significance and Conclusions:
 - i) Describe mitigation measures that will reduce or avoid negative impacts of the Proposal or build on positive impacts.
 - ii) Describe how long term human use impacts resulting from the Proposal will be mitigated.
 - iii) Identify residual impacts and the criteria proposed to evaluate their significance.
 - iv) Identify monitoring requirements, and whether more extensive environmental work or study is required.

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SUBSEQUENT STUDIES

- 10 Where an EIS has been prepared and accepted as part of any Proposal a new EIS is generally not required at a later stage in the approval process, except, in accordance with this policy:

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- a) Where a Proposal is submitted that is not consistent with the Proposal contemplated in a previously submitted and accepted EIS, the Planning and Development Department may require the following:

- i) A new EIS be submitted which addresses the new Proposal; or
- ii) An addendum to the previous EIS be submitted that incorporates the proposed changes.

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- b) Where the prior EIS does not address details or issues pertinent to land use and development impacts, an addendum to the original EIS will be required by the Planning and Development Department. The Terms of Reference for such an addendum may be limited to the land use and development issues and mitigations.

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- c) Where there has been a change to the landscape and/or site conditions adjacent to or within the development footprint the Planning and Development Department may require either:

- i) a new EIS be submitted, which addresses the landscape changes; or
- ii) an addendum to the previous EIS be submitted, which incorporates the proposed changes; or
- iii) an update in writing from a qualified environmental professional stating that the contents of the originally submitted and accepted EIS are still relevant and applicable.

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SUBMISSION OF THE EIS

- 11 The EIS shall be submitted electronically.
- 12 Any documents referenced in the EIS shall be made available electronically to the Town of Canmore upon request.

REFERRALS

- 13 The Town may at its discretion refer anything covered under this policy for comment. Typical referrals include:
 - a) Province of Alberta.
 - b) Third Party Reviewer.

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THIRD-PARTY REVIEW

- 14 The EISs will be reviewed by a relevant qualified professional(s).
- 15 The Third-Party Reviewer will act as an independent consultant and will report directly to the Planning and Development Department.
- 16 For a more effective and efficient third-party review process, the Town's consultant should be engaged and involved from the beginning of the EIS process, rather than upon submission of the EIS to the Town. The Third-Party Reviewer may identify and make recommendations on how to reduce, mitigate or avoid negative impacts of the Proposal including raising concerns if the negative impacts cannot be satisfactorily reduced, mitigated or avoided.
- 17 All costs associated to a third-party review will be at the expense of the Town of Canmore.
- 18 Notwithstanding the above, the requirement for an independent third-party review of an EIS does not apply to any EIS prepared by or on behalf of the Town.

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ENSURING EIS MITIGATION ACHIEVED

- 19 Where an EIS identifies mitigation measures, these measures shall be incorporated into the relevant planning and engineering documents or approvals to ensure that they are carried out. For example, construction mitigation measures form part of a construction management plan and shall be incorporated as conditions of approval for subdivisions and development permits. Similarly, conditions regarding land use level details such as setbacks shall be incorporated into the relevant land use district.

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EXCEPTIONS

- 20 The Town's Corporate Strategic Team may allow exceptions to this policy if the requested exception(s) conform with the Municipal Development Plan.

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STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

- 21 In accordance with the Town of Canmore Council Strategic Plan 2023-26, this policy is in alignment with the environmental goal: *Canmore is a recognized leader in managing human impact on our environment.*
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RESPONSIBILITIES

- 22 The Planning and Development Department shall be responsible for the maintenance of this policy.
- 23 The Planning and Development Department shall only accept Environmental Impact Statements that comply with this policy.
- 24 The Planning and Development Department shall ensure this policy is available on the Town's website.
- 25 The Planning and Development Department shall ensure that all submitted EISs are reviewed by an approved and contracted Third-Party Reviewer.

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POLICY REVIEW

- 26 This policy will be reviewed at least once in every term of Council.

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RELATED DOCUMENTS

Town of Canmore Municipal Development Plan

Town of Canmore Land Use Bylaw

Town of Canmore FireSmart Mitigation Strategy

Bow Corridor Ecosystem Advisory Group Wildlife Corridor and Habitat Patch Guidelines for the Bow Valley (2012)

Federal and Provincial Legislations and Regulations: any EIS submitted to the Town of Canmore must adhere to the following Legislations and Regulations and any related Standards, Guidelines, Directive and Codes of Practice that fall from, or are related to, these Legislations and Regulations. This may include but is not limited to the following:

- Canadian Environmental Protection Act
- The Fisheries Act (federal and provincial)
- Navigable Waters Protection Act
- Migratory Birds Convention Act
- Public Lands Act
- Water Act (federal and provincial)
- Water (Ministerial) Regulation
- Species at Risk Act
- Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act
- Wildlife Act
- Alberta Wetland Policy (2013)
- Stepping Back from the Water (2012)
- Municipal Government Act
- Alberta Land Stewardship Act and South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

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ATTACHMENTS

None.

AUTHORIZATION:



Sean Krausert
Mayor



Cheryl Hyde
Manager, Municipal Clerk's Office

REVISION HISTORY

Action	Date	Council Motion	Notes
Approved	2016-09-27	265-2016	Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Policy
Amended	2018-10-02	209-2018	Name Change: Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Policy PD-003 and general language update
Amended	2025-07-08	205-2025	General language update to best align with current EIS practices.

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