

In 2005, under the federal gas tax agreement, the Alberta government received \$477 million from the federal government for municipalities. In 2007, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) selected pilot project municipalities to develop a Municipal Sustainability Plan based on sustainable growth initiatives. AUMA developed a guidebook, and organized workshops to help these municipalities chart a course in sustainable planning.

In 2009, Carstairs will be completing a Municipal Sustainability Plan and will be presented to Council on July 13, 2009.

The Educational tool we will be using is The Natural Step course. It is a back-casting method that involves starting with a description of a successful outcome, then working backwards on how that might be achieved. The idea is to build a framework for community decision making by creating a vision for the town and developing descriptions of success from baseline information.

The premise for sustainability and its urgency is the “Ecological Footprint”. The Ecological Footprint has emerged as the world’s premier measuring stick of Humanity’s demand on nature. It measures how much land and water area a human population requires to produce the resource it consumes and to absorb its wastes. Our current global situation since the mid 1980’s has been an ecological overshoot with the annual demand on resources that is exceeding what the Earth can regenerate each year. This is a threat to human well being and the health of the planet and one that needs to be addressed. We need to manage our ecological assets more wisely and take personal and collective action in support of a world where humanity lives within the Earth’s bounds.

Each department represented in the town has the opportunity to be involved in The Municipal Sustainable Plan. As The Steering Committee meets we will be looking at what can we do to make changes necessary to give our children and grandchildren a sustainable future? We have an opportunity before us to make some positive and exciting changes in Carstairs that will promote a more desirable community and keep us accountable and responsible now and into the future.