

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND REPORT

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

The Resort Municipality of Whistler | January 2011

THE PREMIER MOUNTAIN RESORT COMMUNITY
MOVING TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



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INTRODUCTION

Land use is at the very heart of the OCP. The primary purpose of the OCP is to establish objectives and policies to guide local decisions on planning and land use management.

As required under the Local Government Act, the OCP must include designations and policies for the location, amount, type and density of residential development as well as commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses, sand and gravel deposits, restrictions on use of land subject to hazards or environmental sensitivity, location and phasing of major road, sewer and water systems, location type of public facilities, housing policies and greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

The OCP also specifies development areas and development permit designations along with associated development guidelines related to the form and character of development, the protection of the natural environment, protection of development from hazardous conditions, and objectives to promote energy or water conservation or reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

All land use regulations that are enacted, such as zoning bylaws, and all development approvals that may be granted, are required by provincial statute to be consistent with the OCP.

This *Land Use + Development Backgrounder* provides a compilation of relevant background materials related to:

- » Whistler's historic growth and development capacity;
- » Existing development and remaining undeveloped potential;
- » Existing land use distribution;
- » Major land use change and development highlights within the last ten years;
- » Whistler's current land use policy context; and,
- » Recent land use studies or analyses undertaken or currently in progress.

Land use issues, themes and directions identified by the resort community to date through the OCP engagement process have been synthesized and are available in [Mountain Voices: Volume One](#). Together this community input and the backgrounder provide context and direction for land use policy development and the preparation of a progressive, forward-looking and integrated land use plan for Whistler's updated OCP.

CURRENT CONTEXT

Development History + Resort Community Capacity

This section presents Whistler's development history as an emerging destination tourist resort following incorporation as a Resort Municipality in 1976, the associated expansion of Whistler's development capacity over time and its current state as a *maturing* resort community. *Pre-resort land use activity and the historic precedence of shared First Nations lands and overlapping interests of the Squamish and Lil'wat Nations are acknowledged, but are not included within the scope of this backgrounder.*

Major OCP Decision Points

Whistler has undergone tremendous transformation over a relatively short period—from its start as a regional day ski area with the opening of lift-accessed skiing on Whistler Mountain in 1966—to its current status as a world-renowned four-season destination resort community and successful Host Mountain Resort of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

In large part, Whistler’s success is the outcome of pursuing a clear vision implemented through strong growth management, land use and development policies and regulations. This approach started with the municipality’s first Official Community Plan in 1976, which directed the location and pattern of development for the community with a focus on creating a new Town Centre at the base of Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains. The design and layout of this centre, and the associated land uses and character of development, were all carefully planned and implemented through zoning and development controls, to achieve a vibrant village experience for visitors and residents of the community.

This initial plan also introduced the concept of bed units¹ as a capacity measure for managing the growth of the resort community. Through ensuing OCP updates, bed units have become enshrined as a critical measure and tool for achieving a progression of municipal growth management and community development objectives; they have also become a key reference point for the resort community’s understanding of and expectations for Whistler’s ultimate size and capacity.

The following synopsis tracks the history of major OCP decision points, bed unit capacity measures and their relation to Whistler’s community development objectives.

- » At incorporation in 1976, Whistler’s developed residential and commercial accommodation base was estimated to be 6,736 bed units. Over the next decade, planning and development focused on the creation of a high quality resort with a wide range of amenities. With the development of the bed base along with associated service infrastructure, seasonal amenities, community facilities and housing, Whistler became firmly established as a major resort destination.

OCP	Key Policy Objectives
1976	<p>Focused development to Whistler + Blackcomb Mountain ski facilities, and Town Centre at ski area base.</p> <p>Concept of bed units introduced to balance skier, highway and infrastructure capacity.</p> <p>“Warm Bed” policy established to secure supply of accommodation for overnight visitors – implemented through land use and development covenants.</p>

¹ Bed units are an estimate of the actual or potential development capacity of a property zoned to permit accommodation as a principle use (zoning governs the use and development of any given property, however further regulations, restrictive covenants or other development controls may also apply). Accommodation capacity is tracked annually using bed units, as defined by Whistler’s OCP, as a measure of “development intended to reflect servicing and facility requirements for one person”, calculated according to unit type.

1982	<p>Maximum approved development potential of 45,000 bed units (based on municipal/regional infrastructure capacity and recognized concern to preserve natural environment and quality of resort experience).</p> <p>Accommodation phasing tied to provision of service infrastructure, highway and lift capacity.</p> <p>Provision of variety of commercial accommodation and uses focused within Whistler Village and Gondola Areas to increase employment opportunities, stabilize the local economy and increase utilization levels of the mountains.</p>
1989 Major Amendment	<p>+7,500 bed units allowed through zoning amendments to target and achieve the types of development desired by Whistler as it has evolved (i.e. secure summer amenities and mixed-use market and affordable resident housing).</p> <p>Total 52,500 total development cap in addition to new employee housing.</p>
1993	<p>Carried forward cap of 52,500 bed units.</p> <p>Introduction of evaluation criteria for additional development proposals; rezonings to increase this capacity only considered under extraordinary circumstances and benefit.</p>
1996 Council Resolution	<p>+1,700 bed unit increase to the cap for 100% affordable resident housing (based on projected future employee generation; was to be aligned with number of bed units and employees generated under the Employee Works & Services Charge Bylaw).</p>
2004 Whistler 2020	<p><i>Provided for up to 6,650 additional bed units to accommodate the resort community's housing needs and overall goal of maintaining 75% workforce living within Whistler. This has not been incorporated into the OCP to date.</i></p>

Table 1. OCP Policies | Resort Community Capacity 1976-2004

- » By the mid 1980s, Whistler faced new challenges associated with the appropriate size and infrastructure capacity of the resort and desire to protect Whistler's environment and experience of place. In response, the 1982 OCP set the maximum approved development potential at 45,000 bed units (Table 1); at year end, an estimated 30% of that capacity had been built. A 1989 OCP amendment later allowed for an additional 7,500 bed units of accommodation capacity to target and provide for summer resort and community facilities necessary to become an all-season resort as well as needed resident housing (Table 1) – thereby raising the resort community's accommodation capacity to 52,500 bed units. Under the 1989 OCP allocation, Whistler developed two golf courses (now the Chateau Whistler and the Nicklaus North Golf Courses) the Bjorn Borg tennis facility as well as resident and market housing. By year end 1989, Whistler had more than doubled its 1982 *developed* accommodation capacity, reaching an estimated 27,883 bed units (Figure 1).

- » In the early 1990s, Whistler strengthened its growth management policies to restrict any further increases to the resort community capacity except in extraordinary circumstances that would benefit and be supported by the community and the resort and have no unacceptable impacts. The 1993 OCP carried forward the 1989 capacity limit of 52,500 bed units, and introduced formal criteria to review future OCP amendments (see *Part 3: Existing Land Use Plans + Policies*). At year end 1993, Whistler’s developed accommodation capacity had reached 32,085 bed units (Figure 1).

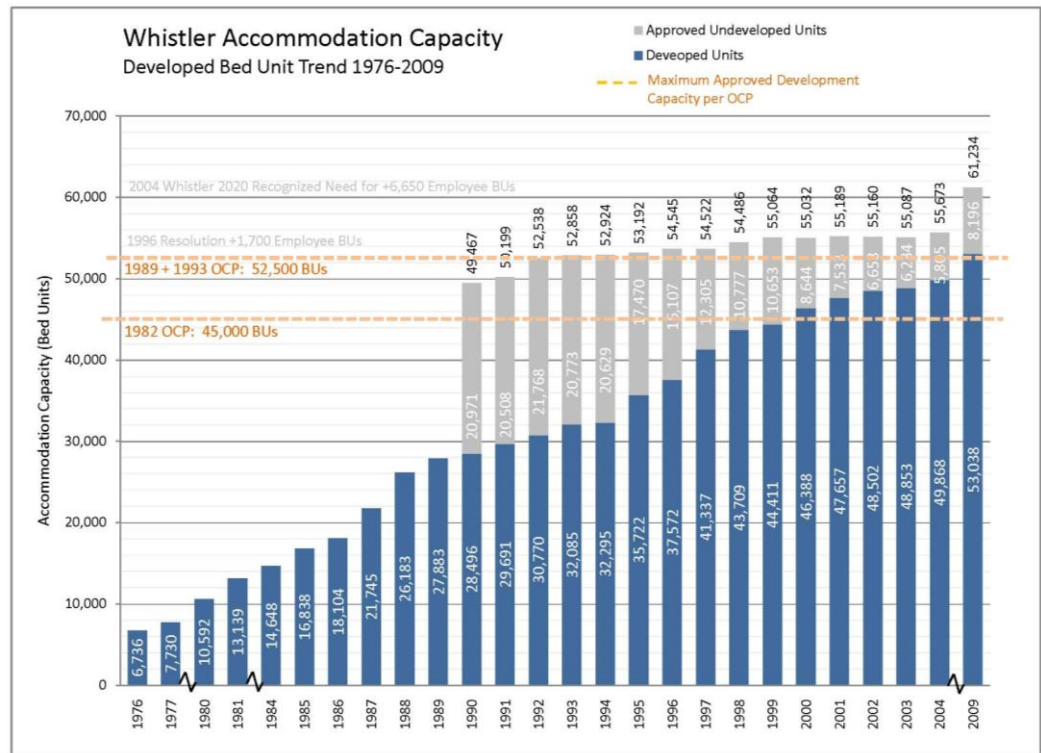


Figure 1. RMOW Accommodation Bed Unit Capacity 1976-2009*

*Note: Whistler’s annual Accommodation Land Use Inventory tracking formally began in 1990; at this time, the RMOW began tracking both developed and approved undeveloped accommodation capacity by accommodation type. Prior to 1990, total annual number of approved but undeveloped bed units was not tracked; this graph shows the estimated annual number of developed bed units from 1977 through 1989 for reference.

- » By the mid-1990s, Whistler focused in earnest on securing the necessary supply of affordable resident housing to support the ability of Whistler’s workforce locally. Council adopted the original Employee Housing Service Charge Bylaw² in 1995, and resolved to allocate an additional 1,700 employee bed units to the development cap the following year (1996). Projects providing 100% affordable resident housing such as Glacier Ridge, Barnfield Farm, Millar’s Ridge, Spruce Grove, Green Lake Estates, Lorimer Court and 19 Mile Creek were approved. Between 1995 and year-end 1999, an additional 322 resident dwelling units were developed for a total resident-restricted inventory of 878 dwelling units (almost 3,000 resident bed units).

² Employee Housing Service Charge Bylaw No 1114, 1995 was adopted June 5, 1995.

- » While Whistler's existing approved capacity continued to build out over time, the community embarked on a visioning process in 1997 (Whistler 2002) to help guide the resort community into the new millennium. Subsequent strategic planning based on an integrated 'systems-based' approach for sustainability (*The Natural Step*³) renewed the Whistler 2002 vision and culminated with the adoption of the Whistler 2020 Comprehensive Sustainability Plan in 2004. Whistler 2020 identified priorities, directions, strategies and actions to achieve its vision. Within the Resident Housing Strategy, *Whistler 2020 specifically identified the need for up to 6,650 additional bed units to accommodate the resort community's housing needs and overall goal of maintaining 75% of the workforce within Whistler.*
- » At year-end 2004, a total of 49,868 bed units were developed, within the total estimated approved capacity of 55,673 bed units. By this time, Whistler had seen the completion/semi-completion of a number of major commercial and residential projects, including: the Four Seasons Hotel and Residences, the Pan Pacific II, Nita Lake Lodge, Nita Lake Estates and Hillside Lodge (Evolution property) in Whistler Creek.

Current Resort Community Capacity

Developed and Remaining Approved Undeveloped

Accommodation (Year-end 2009)

- » In the five years between 2004 and 2009, Whistler's total approved accommodation capacity increased by 1,312 dwellings (5,561 bed units) bringing the estimated total committed capacity to 17,388 dwelling units (61,234 bed units), as shown in Figure 1.
- » Approximately 88% of this capacity is considered *developed or built* for a total of 15,380 dwelling/accommodation units (53,038 bed units); of this total 51% is zoned for residential/residential tourist accommodation use, 44% is commercial tourist accommodation, and 7% is resident-restricted housing.
- » Another 2,008 approved dwelling/accommodation units (8,196 bed units) remain undeveloped.⁴ This includes 327 vacant single family lots, 22 duplex units, 524 commercial accommodation units, 97 multi-family, 382 resident restricted units and an additional zoned potential for 56,900 m² of additional residential gross floor area at Cheakamus Crossing.⁵
- » With the exception of the remaining undeveloped Tennis Resort Lands⁶, the unbuilt accommodation under the mixed-use commercial zoning for Whistler Village Lot 9 (Whistler

³ In 2000, Whistler adopted The Natural Step framework to guide its progress towards sustainability. The TNS framework is a 'systems perspective' for looking upstream to plan for a socially and ecologically sustainable society (in which a vibrant economy is the means to ensure we achieve these goals). It is based on four basic TNS sustainability principles or system conditions. For more information see whistler2020.ca or thenaturalstep.org

⁴ This provides a snapshot of remaining undeveloped potential by accommodation type. Note that in addition to the unbuilt capacity reported here, some residual capacity exists (previously allocated bed units but undeveloped to date) within the inventory, currently estimated at approximately 600 bed units.

⁵ Remaining residential development capacity at Cheakamus Crossing includes: Phase 1: 16 lots, 7,400m² MF residential, 7,651m² live-work/MF, as well as the Phase 2 residential reserve of 41,850m²; assuming an average dwelling unit size of 100 m², this equates to an additional 569 dwelling units or 2,276 bed units at Cheakamus Crossing (Phase 2).

⁶ The Holborn (Tennis Resort Lands) are currently zoned Tourist Accommodation Zone (TA10) and Residential Multiple Fourty-Three (RM43) permitting market accommodation (hotel), indoor and outdoor recreation and employee housing; the total maximum gfa is 34,672 m² with a max of 27,500 m² for hotel, 3,922 m² for indoor recreation facilities (tennis) and

Olympic Plaza), the Westside TA17 property (5298 Alta Lake Rd) and residential tourist accommodation at Lakecrest, Blueberry and Nicklaus North (Cypress Place), Whistler's commercial accommodation bed base has been built to its approved capacity.

- » Other remaining residential accommodation capacity is focused at Rainbow (246 dwellings), and Baxter Creek (89 dwellings). Significant large-lot detached single family capacity (over 90 unbuilt lots) still exists within neighbourhoods such as Stonebridge, Spring Creek – Tyne Bridge and Khyber Ridge, Kadenwood, and Nita Lake Estates. Capacity associated with several undeveloped historic resident restricted housing projects also remains (Blackcomb Base Building 8, Cedar Glen at Spring Creek and the 2 acre Alpha Creek residential parcel).

Non-Residential Floor Space (2010)

As part of its annual monitoring, Whistler tracks developed non-residential floor area, capturing expansion and utilization of commercial (retail, office, personal service, food/restaurant, conference/convention, recreation/tourism), industrial (light manufacturing, wholesale/storage, heavy manufacturing), public/institutional floor area, as well as vacant space trends. *For an alternative summary of Total Land Area by Zone, see the Land Use Distribution by Zone (Table 3).*

- » Between 2000 and 2010, the inventory of non-residential floor area increased by 55,590 m², bringing Whistler's current developed capacity of non-residential space to 222,837 m² (or 2.4 million ft²) (Table 2). This inventory consists of 143,124 m² (65%) of commercial⁷, 27,197 m² (13%) of industrial, and 45,108 m² (20%) of public/institutional space (Figure 2). Another 7,407 m² (3%) is vacant.

4,750 m² for resident restricted housing; 837 bed units allocated under existing zoning. A zoning amendment proposing single family detached, duplex, townhouse and apartment units that may be used for both residential and tourist accommodation use (RTA) and designation of resident housing to be housing for seniors has received third reading. Proposed zoning has a maximum GFA of 24,212 m² for RTA units (max of 181 dwelling units), 2,780 m² for senior apartment units (max 25 dwelling units) including max of 200 for seniors activity centre, and no density restriction on indoor recreation (tennis and recreation facility) including restaurant use.

⁷ Commercial floor area includes retail, office, service uses, food & beverage, conference/convention space and recreation/tourism uses.

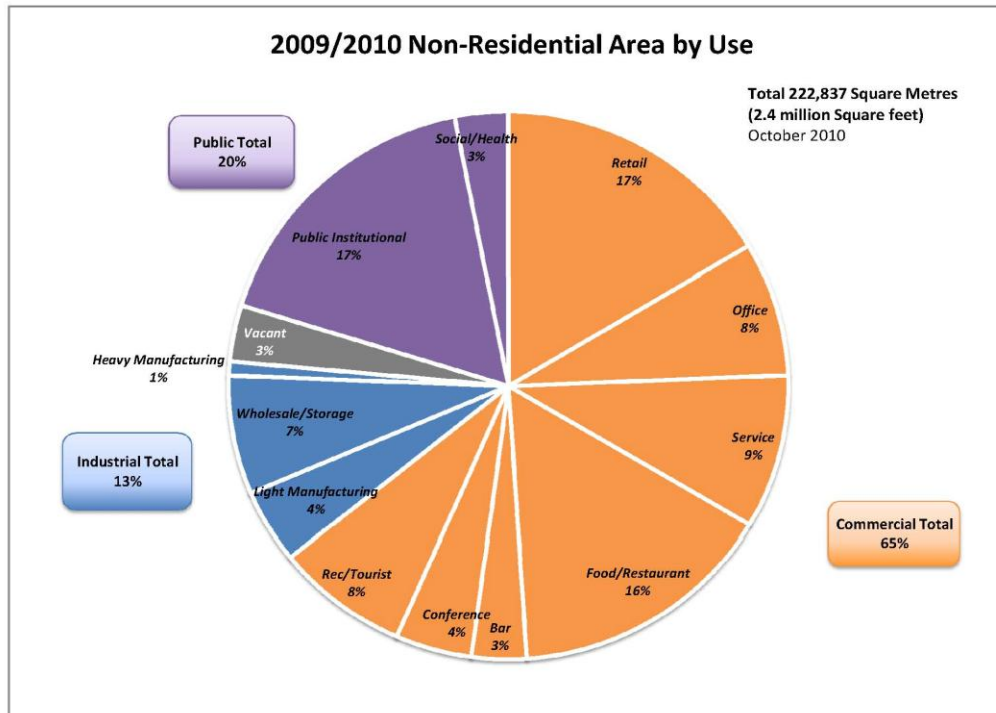


Figure 2. Developed Non-Residential Floor Area by Use (2009/10)

COMMERCIAL

- » Existing commercial space is concentrated within Whistler’s primary commercial nodes in Whistler Village (66,414 m² or 46% of all commercial space), the Upper Village (16,712 m² or 12%), as well as Whistler Creek (14,333 m² or 10%). Another 23,264 m² of commercial service is situated in Function Junction, accounting for 16% of all commercial area (Figure 3). Neighbourhood-serving commercial centres include Nesters (total developed commercial 2,266 m²), Rainbow (approved undeveloped commercial area of 2,100 m²) and Cheakamus Crossing (1,076 m² built within total approved commercial of 1,780 m²)⁸. Additional small local commercial areas exist at Alpine South (483 m²) and Mons (1,993 m²).
- » Since 2000, commercial floor area has grown by 27,688 m², with the largest area changes in personal service, food/restaurant and recreation/tourism uses (Table 2). Additions include Franz’s Trail commercial, Nita Lake Lodge, Scandinave Spa, Cheakamus Crossing/Athlete Centre, as well as additions to support Whistler-Blackcomb operations and the new Peak 2 Peak terminal building.

⁸ Under the new parcel-specific zoning for Cheakamus Crossing, a total of 1,500 m² is permitted for local service commercial, personal service, neighbourhood public house, restaurant and retail (with a limit of 250m² of retail), as well as 280m² of professional office space, per Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 1937, 2010, which was adopted October 5, 2010.

INDUSTRIAL

- » Approximately 68% (18,520m²) of Whistler's total industrial floor space (27,197 m²) is located in Function Junction; another 2,175m² is focused at a secondary node at Mons. Remaining area is scattered throughout the municipality within maintenance facilities and on-mountain operations space.
- » Industrial area has increased by 4,274 m² since 2000, predominantly due to a shift in use to wholesale/storage primarily in Function Junction as well as an addition of approximately 680 m² of new storage and light manufacturing capacity.

PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL

- » Whistler has a public/institutional floor area inventory of 45,108 m².
- » Major public institutional additions since 2000 (for a total increase of 19,549 m²) include the Spruce Grove Field House, Spring Creek Fire Hall, School and Daycare, Millenium Place, Whistler Library, the Squamish-Lil'wat Cultural Centre, Whistler Sliding Centre and High Performance Athlete Centre, Austria Passivhaus, the Waste Water Treatment Plant administration building, Composting Facility and Waste Transfer Station.

Additional remaining undeveloped non-residential floor area potential as part of Whistler's already committed and approved capacity includes:

- » 4,360 m² (~47,000 ft²) of commercial (Rainbow, RMOW Olympic Plaza Lot 9, and an additional allowance of 20 m² per CC1 properties within Whistler Village);
- » 2,300 m² (~25,000 ft²) of public/institutional (Whistler Olympic Plaza Lot 1 - Master Plan estimate); and,
- » 32,516 m² (350,000 ft²) of light industrial, service commercial, restricted office and restricted retail (Function Junction)⁹.

This does not include commitments under the First Nations Legacy Land Agreement for tourism and resort-related opportunities in the Callaghan Valley (potential for golf course and outdoor recreation facilities excluding accommodation development) and existing gravel pit operations at the Cougar Pit Lands. There are also a number of rezonings currently in process that seek to add to Whistler's capacity. Rezoning currently under review include Mons Light Industrial, Tennis Resort Lands, and Rainbow Commercial¹⁰.

⁹ Note, this is the maximum potential. Industrial uses typically do not build to the maximum permitted densities, due to parking, loading and storage requirements.

¹⁰ Recent application has been made to amend the Commercial Development One (CD1) Zone to increase maximum commercial GFA from 2,100 m² to total of 3,023 m², increasing service station convenience store to 223 m² and increasing commercial by 800 m² to accommodate proposed increase in neighbourhood grocery store from initially proposed 8,000-10,000 ft² to 19,375 ft².

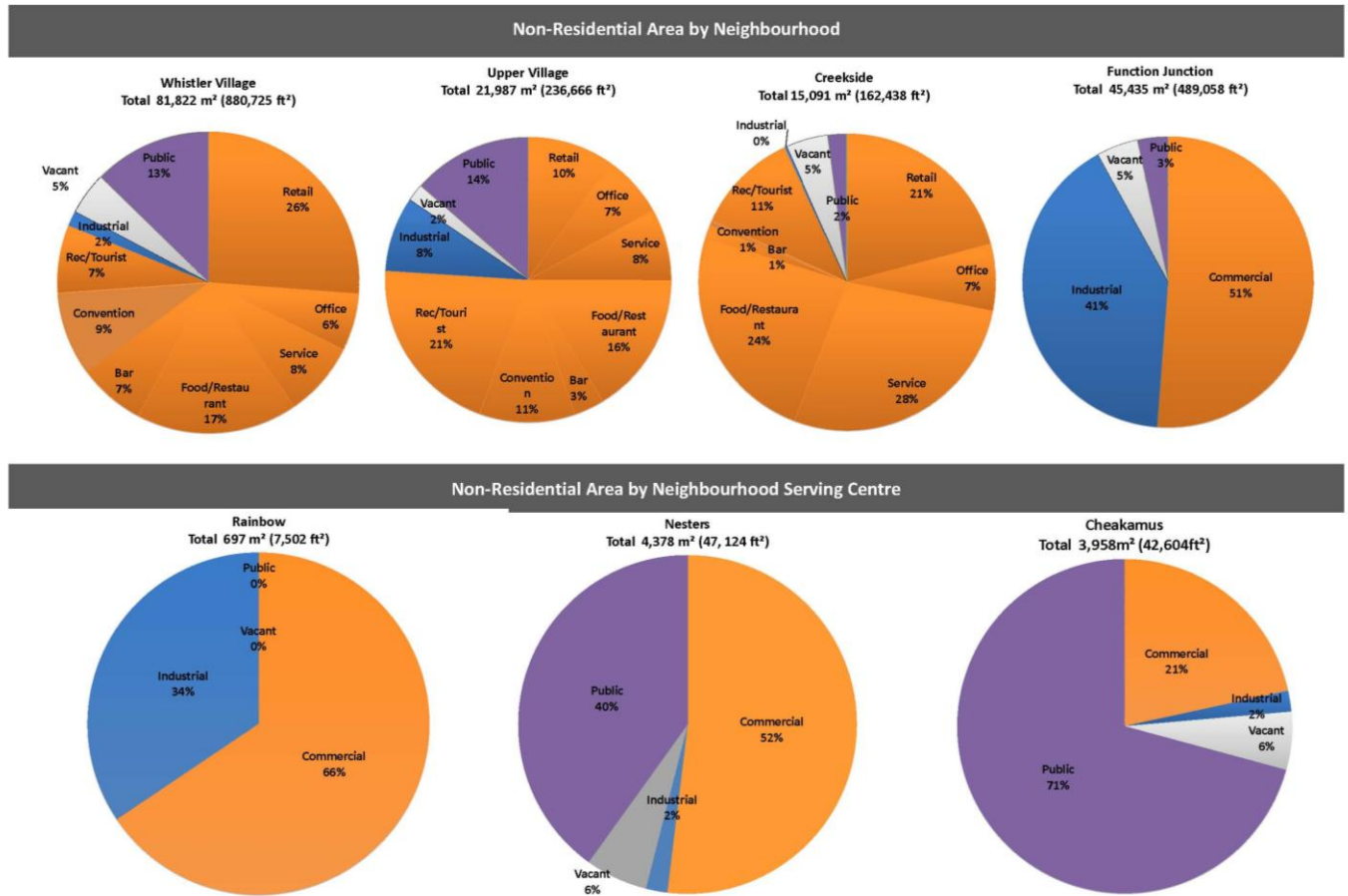


Figure 3. Developed Non-Residential Floor Area by Neighbourhood (2009/10)

Non-Residential Floor Space Inventory By Use (2000-2010)

Category of Use	2000	2005	2010	2000-2010		2005-2010	
	(m ²)	(m ²)	(m ²)	Area Change	Change per year (m ²)	Area Change	Change per year (m ²)
Commercial							
Retail	33,707	36,620	36,712	3,005	301	92	18
Office	20,740	18,052	17,602	-3,138	-314	-450	-90
Service	9,811	15,515	20,182	10,371	1,037	4,668	934
Food/Restaurant	24,688	33,609	34,549	9,861	986	939	188
Bar	5,783	6,322	7,068	1,285	128	746	149
Convention/Conf.	7,773	9,677	9,863	2,090	209	186	37
Recreation/Tourism	12,934	13,980	17,149	4,215	421	3,169	634
Commercial Total	115,436	133,775	143,124	27,688	2,769	9,350	1,870
Industrial							
Light Manufacturing	9,399	8,973	9,787	388	39	814	163
Wholesale/Storage	11,966	14,896	15,574	3,608	361	678	136
Heavy Manufacturing	1,558	1,738	1,837	279	28	99	20
Industrial Total	22,923	25,606	27,197	4,274	427	1,591	318
Public							
Public Institutional	20,560	29,942	38,236	17,676	1,768	8,294	1,659
Social/Health	4,999	6,579	6,872	1,873	187	293	
Public Total	25,559	36,520	45,108	19,549	1,955	8,587	1,717
Vacant	3,329	10,667	7,407	4,078	408	-3,260	-652
Grand Total	167,247	206,569	222,837	55,590	5,559	16,268	3,254

Table 2. Developed Non-Residential Floor Area 2000-2010

Recent Land Use Change & Development Highlights 2000-2010

- » **Municipal Boundary Expansion.** In 2008, Whistler's total municipal land area, which is part of larger Fraser Basin bioregion¹¹, grew to 24,378 hectares (243.8 km²) with the approval of boundary expansion of 77 km² in 2008.
 - Lands annexed to the south and southwest include Brandywine/Callaghan Valley West, Whistler Interpretive Forest/Jane Lakes and Mt. Sproat, enabling more active stewardship of Whistler's watersheds and providing for better coordination and management of surrounding lands to support resort community objectives¹². The expanded municipal area brings Whistler's *population density* to roughly 42 persons per square kilometer.¹³
- » **Expansion of Whistler's Developed Area.** Whistler's total developed area¹⁴ increased on a three year average between 2006-2008, and again in 2009, to accommodate lands for new resident housing, the First Nations' Legacy Land Agreement, as well as lands for BC Transit and the Whistler Sliding Centre.¹⁵ A total of 1,135 ha or 4.6 % of total municipal lands are currently developed or zoned for development (2010) The remaining undeveloped lands are largely comprised primarily of Provincial Crown Lands with Rural Resource zoning which make up 91% of the Municipality's total land area.

Major development in the valley during this period has cumulatively added to the resort community's development footprint, while securing legacies that directly benefit the community and the region, as follows:

- » **Games-time Infrastructure + Resort Community Legacies.** Most recently, in preparation for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, Whistler delivered Games-time infrastructure and competition venues as part of Whistler's commitment as 2010 Host-Mountain Resort.
 - In 2006, following closure of the landfill, construction began on the Whistler Athletes' Village on the South Cheakamus Bench. Once complete, the Athlete Village welcomed 2,850 temporary occupants during the Games and has been transformed post Games into a legacy

¹¹ The Fraser Basin bioregion encompasses roughly one-quarter of the province and is drained by Fraser River and its 13 main watersheds.

¹² In 2008, the Province approved a RMOW boundary expansion, adding 77km² or 7,700 ha to the total municipal land base, including 12km² to the southwest (Brandywine/Callaghan Valley west), 38km² to the south (Whistler Interpretive Forest/Jane Lakes) and 27km² to the west (Mt. Sproat).

¹³ Total municipal area divided by 2009 BC Stats population estimate of permanent resident population of 10,228. Source: BC Stats Population Estimates: <http://www.bccstats.gov.bc.ca/DATA/pop/estspop.asl#totpop>. For average density (Whistler 2020 Indicator) see Total Developed Area summary later in this section.

¹⁴ This Whistler 2020 Built Environment Strategy indicator tracks the physical growth of the urban landscape with a goal to limit continuous encroachment on surrounding natural areas. The physical footprint of Whistler's developed area includes the land area within the boundaries of all zoned land except those areas zoned as parks, protected areas or extremely low density parcels of land (Residential Single Estate lands). It does not include roadways (including Highway 99). Source: Whistler 2020 Performance Monitoring Program www.whistler2020.ca

¹⁵ The 2009 increase in developed area was to accommodate an increasing need for resident housing, roadways and new First Nations land agreements (the rezoning for the Alpine North Legacy lands along with rezoning the Function Legacy Lands, Cheakamus North between Spring Creek and Bayshores and a rezoning in Whistler Cay Estates). Two land use changes that did not require rezonings (and therefore did not change to a 'developed' designation) but added to the municipality's 2009 developed area, include the BC Transit lands (23 ha) and land cleared for the Whistler Sliding Centre (21 ha).

resident neighbourhood¹⁶ for approximately 800 residents, contributing substantially to Whistler's goal of housing 75 per cent of its residents locally. The completed Athlete Centre complex includes a high-performance centre¹⁷, an athletes' lodge, and several athletes' townhomes providing a total accommodation capacity of over 300 beds for visiting athletes who are competing, training or living in the region, as well as visiting educational and cultural groups.

- The Whistler Sliding Centre¹⁸ comprising a site area of 21 hectares on the southeast flank of Blackcomb was completed in December 2007 to host bobsleigh, luge and skeleton competitions during the Games. The sliding sports venue includes a 1,450 metre long competition track and associated support buildings. The facility, one of two in Canada, showcases sliding sports by hosting international competitions and developing sliding sports opportunities in the community.
 - Fifteen kilometres south of Whistler in the Callaghan Valley, the Whistler Olympic Park¹⁹ opened its doors to both recreational and competitive skiers during the 2007-08 winter season. During the Games, the facility was home to biathlon, cross-country skiing, Nordic combined and ski jumping. The compact, one-square-kilometre Olympic Games venue core area includes three separate venue stadiums (cross-country skiing, biathlon, ski jumping); technical sport buildings at each of the stadiums; 11,000 square-foot day lodge; 14 kilometres of biathlon and cross-country competition trails and two ski jumps, plus an additional 35 kilometres of training and recreational ski trails; sewer, water and power services; access and internal roads; maintenance building; parking lots and other related infrastructure facilities.
- » **New Residential Neighbourhoods.** True to the commitment to increase affordable resident housing, Whistler has grown its inventory of residential lands with the creation of a number of distinct new neighbourhoods and residential projects. Since 2000, Whistler has approved over 800 new resident dwelling units. A total of 382 resident restricted units remain undeveloped and an additional zoned potential for 56,900 m² of additional residential gross floor area exists at Cheakamus Crossing. Residential housing project highlights include:
- Nita Lake Townhouses (44 units; approved in 2005).
 - 'The Lofts' in Function Junction provided 30 resident restricted units in the new industrial-residential zone (IR2) permitting a combination of light industrial, service commercial, office and medium-density residential use (approved in 2005).
 - Redevelopment of the Mount Whistler Lodge site in Alta Vista provided 4 resident restricted townhomes (Lakecrest; approved 2005).

¹⁶ Development of Cheakamus Crossing has been managed by the Whistler 2020 Development Corporation and made possible by the support of the Province of British Columbia's Resort Municipality Initiative, the Government of Canada, and VANOC.

¹⁷ The High Performance Centre features a 4,000 ft² strength and conditioning gym, a 5,000 ft² gymnastics hall, recovery and regeneration rooms, change rooms, a testing room, offices and a multipurpose meeting/class room.

¹⁸ The Whistler Sliding Centre is now operated under the direction of the Whistler 2010 Sport Legacies, supported by an endowment trust that was established by the federal and provincial governments as part of their overall 2010 Winter Games venues investment.

¹⁹ Construction of the venue is estimated at \$119.7 million and was jointly funded by the governments of Canada and British Columbia.

- Redevelopment of the former Shoestring Lodge site began with the approval of Fitzsimmons Walk, integrating 41 market and 36 resident-restricted dwellings in a new residential enclave close to the Village (approved 2007).
 - Cheakamus Crossing (Athlete Village) Neighbourhood (the comprehensive development plan approved in 2006/07 laid the groundwork for the neighbourhood that will accommodate between 1500-2000 permanent residents (318 resident dwelling units, as well as future residential detached market units ~16 dwellings), as well as short-term accommodation within the Athlete Centre Lodge (100 units) and Cheakamus Hostel (54 units), future live-work uses and an additional residential reserve gross floor area of 41,850 m².
 - Rainbow Neighbourhood project, providing a total of 271 dwelling units north of Alpine. The Rainbow comprehensive development plan allowed for 51 market units, as well as 140 mixed resident detached and multiple housing units as well as 40 seniors housing units (approved 2007).
 - Zoning for Baxter Creek was adopted in 2009, allowing 48 detached and 41 multi-family dwellings above Rainbow. The development of these Alpine North Legacy Lands was enabled by the Legacy Land Agreement and transfer of residual bed units from the Crown and unused bed units from the Tennis Resort Land development.
- » **New resort community facilities and amenities.** New resort community facilities and amenities have added to Whistler's resort amenity and arts & cultural space:
- The **Squamish-Lillooet Cultural Centre** (completed July 2008), the LEED Gold-certified 14,500 ft² **Whistler Public Library** (January 2008) and **Whistler Olympic Plaza** (estimated completion Summer 2011) have added to the cultural capital of Whistler Village, which continues to represent the heart of the resort community. The Whistler Olympic Plaza will provide an animated public gathering and event space to draw guests to the village as well as future commercial and public/institutional use under the current zoning. A comprehensive events strategy which will integrate the Whistler Olympic Plaza with existing venues is currently being developed.
 - **Whistler Conference Centre Upgrade/Expansion.** Whistler's largest conference facility with a total capacity of 65,000 ft² underwent extensive renovations in 2007/8 to address deficiencies and provide infrastructure improvements for conferences, events and festivals key to the resort's success. In advance of the 2010 Winter Games, the RMOW supported additional capital improvements budgeted using RMTT Program funds in the Five-Year Financial Plan. This allowed Whistler to host large-scale events such as the 2009 Federation of Canadian Municipalities Conference, Keystone Symposia and BC Water Waste.
- » **Expanded Recreational Offerings.** In the last five years Whistler has seen expanded recreational offerings including the growth and enhancement of the **Whistler Mountain Bike Park** offering 4,946 feet or 1,507 metres of lift-serviced mountain bike trails, the development of additional on-mountain lift capacity accessing the **Symphony Amphitheatre** of Whistler Mountain in 2006, as well as the \$51.4 million **Peak to Peak Gondola** linking the peaks of Blackcomb and Whistler Mountains which was opened to the public in December 2008.
- » **Community Infrastructure Improvements.** Notable resort community infrastructure development funded by the municipal water, sewer and solid waste funds in the last 10 years include:

- **Fitzsimmons Creek Sediment Basin** (Fitz Creek Debris Barrier – Province of BC);
- **Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade** (2008/09) \$51.5 million upgrade, LEED Silver;
- **Landfill Closure** (South Cheakamus Bench) and **Solid Waste Transfer Station and Composting Facility** (Callaghan Valley);
as well as major locally and provincially-funded transportation-related improvements:
- **Gondola Transit Exchange Upgrades** (2009)—improvements to passenger loading areas, platforms, walkways, shelter, public payphones, and benches and landscaping.
- **Day Skier Lot Upgrades** (completed 2009)—paving, landscaping, drainage control, lighting and signage to improve parking utilization, guest experience, and introduce alternative transportation demand management and support transit and sustainable transportation initiatives.
- \$600 million **Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project** (completed October 2009)
- \$9.8 million **Highway 99 upgrades** from Function Junction to Village Gate Boulevard approved by the Province in 2008 to improve traffic circulation and safety, and support the shared use of Highway 99 in Whistler by cyclists, motorists, and transit.

For more information, see the Transportation + Utilities Backgrounder.

- » **Future Resort Land Trust.** In 2008, six areas were designated as part of a new Resort Land Trust within the OCP per the *Legacy Land Agreement* with the Squamish Nation and Lil'wat Nation. Together, these lands total 180 hectares; the designation identifies these lands as potential candidates for future residential, light industrial, resort infrastructure and rural resource use, as follows:
- **Callaghan Valley Area Lands** (resort infrastructure; 103 ha) and Callaghan Valley Entrance Lands (rural resource usage; 27 ha); potential development for tourism and resort related opportunities; potential for a golf course and outdoor recreation facilities to service winter and summer recreational users.
 - **Function Junction Lands** (light industrial; 2 ha); zoned for commercial service station (CS2; max. Gross floor area approx. 1,250 m²) and light industrial, service commercial, professional office, and limited retail (IS5; maximum gross floor area of approx. 10,744 m²).
 - **Residential** designated lands above Rainbow known as Alpine North Block 2 (13 ha); these lands have been zoned for residential development (detached and multi-unit dwellings).
 - **Green Lake Area Lands** (rural resource usage; 22 ha); it is acknowledged that the current OCP does not contemplate development of Green Lake (Emerald West) area.
 - **Cougar Pit Lands** (rural resource usage; 13 ha); the existing gravel pit land use is permitted; parties to discuss long term development opportunities for lands; RMOW to consider development application for lands.
See Section 3.0 (Existing Land Use Plans + Policies) of this Backgrounder for more information.
- » **Community Resource Use.** In the last 10 years, Whistler has also seen shifts in local resource use and land management.

- **Cheakamus Community Forest.** In April 2009 the RMOW and the Squamish Nation and Lil'wat Nation signed a 25-year tenure license with the Province of British Columbia for the 30,260 hectares of forest land surrounding Whistler²⁰, which is comprised of a combination of old growth forest²¹, second growth forest, alpine areas, rock, development, streams and wildlands. Of this, approximately 15,000 hectares are protected from commercial harvesting by mechanisms such as Land & Resource Management Plan Wildland Zoning, Old Growth Management Area status or Ungulate Winter Range status. Whistler has recently concluded negotiations to acquire Western Forest Products' timber licence, which adds 1,300 hectares of old growth timber to the CCF. Only 10% of this is suitable for logging, with the remaining not being merchantable (available for logging).
- Representatives from each of the partners sit on the Cheakamus Community Forest (CCF) Society, which oversees planning, public consultation and management of forest operations; Richmond Plywood has been contracted to carry out the forest harvesting operations.
- Historically, during the 1970s through 1990s an average of 1,000 hectares of land per year was affected by timber harvesting in the Whistler area. Under the community forest, the average area of land affected will be approximately 40 hectares. The CCF tenure mandates an annual harvest of 20,000 cubic metres (m³) of wood per year, following the successful negotiation with the Ministry of Forests and Range to reduce the timber harvest from 33 -36,000 m³. To minimize impacts of harvesting and place priority on community values (visual quality, watershed, recreation and cultural), the CCF is developing an ecosystem-based management plan with EcoTrust Canada in accordance with the CCF Forest Stewardship Plan guidelines.

For more information, see the Natural Areas Backgrounder.

- **Material Extraction + Processing.** Material extraction and processing takes place in two areas within the Resort Municipality. The 'W6 Basalt Pit' is an active quarry with an asphalt plant operation at 1200 Whistler Quarry Road, southwest of the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood. This site is 19.30 hectares in size and received initial zoning for industrial processing in 1984. The gravel pit to the northwest of Cheakamus Crossing is 4.61 hectares and was formerly used for asphalt processing and is now being used for storm water detention as part of the Cheakamus Crossing storm water management plan. Another gravel pit (known as the Indian Head Quarry) is located near Emerald Estates at Cougar Mountain. This 6 hectare site received IP2 zoning in 1994 but is no longer active. The manufacturing and processing of gravel and aggregate on this property is restricted to using only materials mined on the parcel.
- **Independent Power Projects (IPPs).** Two green energy power projects are currently operating within municipal boundaries and delivering power to BC Hydro under Electricity Purchase Agreements (EPAs). The Brandywine Creek hydroelectric project obtained RMOW zoning authorization 2002 and supplies 34 gigawatt hours (GWh) annually. The 7.5 megawatt Fitzsimmons Creek hydro project is located entirely within Whistler Blackcomb's operating area, annually supplying 36 GWh annually through BC Hydro's Standing Offer Program and is being used to offset the total annual energy consumption

²⁰ The CCF boundaries are based on the previous Local Resource Use Plan boundary and encompass the Brandywine, Callaghan, Madeley, Rainbow, 19 Mile, 16 Mile, Wedge, Cheakamus and Daisy Lake areas.

²¹ Forested area covers about two thirds of the entire CCF area, and old growth forests account for just over 60 per cent of the forested portion. Based on the most recent forest cover information, of the approximately 12,175 hectares of old growth forest in the CCF, less than 1,400 hectares may be logged, or about 10 per cent of what exists, and this 10 per cent will be logged in a sustainable manner over a 25-year period. This is approximately five per cent of the community forest land base.

of Whistler Blackcomb's winter and summer operations. In response to Provincial Energy Policy established in 2002 and the identified potential for development of green energy projects largely in the form of run of river hydroelectric within Whistler and the greater Sea to Sky corridor, the SLRD adopted IPP policies and recommendations in 2003 and the RMOW followed suit by establishing guidelines embedded within the 2007 *Land Use Procedures and Fees Bylaw* detailed on the following page.

- **Commercial Recreation + Adventure Tourism.** Crown lands within the Resort Municipality utilized for adventure tourism and commercial backcountry recreation are authorized under Crown land tenures administered by the Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB) of the Ministry of Natural Resource Operations. ILMB's *Guided Adventure Tourism Policy* frames the specific tenure types enabling commercial recreation activities: permits, license of occupation and leases. There are more than 20 commercial recreation operators in the Whistler area, offering heli-ski, snowmobile, ATV, mountain bike, bungee, zip trek, river rafting and other adventures.

Crown Land Use Referrals. The Resort Municipality responds to referrals by the Province of B.C. in respect of these water license and commercial recreation applications for Crown land tenure, according to guidelines set out in the RMOW's *Land Use Procedures and Fees Bylaw*²². This bylaw provides high level guidance and criteria for municipal review, including consistency with the following:

- the Municipality's vision, values, priorities and directions and commitment to sustainability;
- current bylaws and municipal policies, including the OCP, Zoning and Parking Bylaw, Whistler Local Resource Use Plan, Forest Recreation Plan, and the Whistler Environmental Strategy;
- current regional land use plans and agreements such as the Sea-to-Sky Land Resource Management Plan and the Sea-to-Sky Backcountry Recreation Sharing Accord; as well as consideration of the affects on:
 - areas of significant environmental, scenic, social or cultural land use concerns; ability to protect and maintain environmental integrity, and uses land and resources within their capacity to sustain use and maintain biological diversity; significant impact on wildlife habitat and populations; existing fish habitat capability.
 as well as whether the proposed tenure:
 - exhibits high standards of quality and appearance, and building materials, colours and façade treatment are consistent with the mountain character, and service and back-of-house areas are suitably screened;
 - reflects social carrying capacity;
 - preserves public use and access to and over Crown land or whether closure or reduction of public use and access is acceptable or whether an alternate public use opportunity should be provided elsewhere;
 - addresses ongoing maintenance of existing trails and facilities; and, whether proposed commercial recreation application:

²² Bylaw 1821, 2007.

- contributes to a balanced mix of viable commercial and public recreational experiences in the Whistler area.
- is compatible with the operational needs of existing tenured commercial recreation businesses.

Current Municipal Land Use Distribution (2010)

Municipal land use distribution is based upon zoning classifications using the Municipality's GIS (*Geographic Information System*), as presented in Table 3. Table 4 presents land use categories as a percentage of the total developed²³ municipal area.

- » **Rural Resource:** 22,074 hectares of the municipal land area are zoned RR1, representing 91% of the total land area and permitting limited low-density uses on minimum parcel sizes of 40 hectares. With a few small exceptions, these lands are exclusively Provincial Crown lands that support a variety of uses and tenures, including residential, commercial and public recreation, as well as material extraction.
- » **Residential:** Almost 6% of the Municipality is zoned for residential use, accounting for 1,390 hectares of land area (and representing 60% of the total developed area²⁴). The majority of residential land (890 hectares) is zoned for very low-density single family use (residential 'estate' lots). Another 367 hectares provide for low-medium density single and two-family dwellings, while 133 hectares are zoned for medium density multi-residential use, including the low/medium density dwellings at Whistler's new residential neighbourhoods at Rainbow, Baxter Creek and Cheakamus Crossing. Another 87 hectares are zoned to allow temporary tourist accommodation when unoccupied for residential use (RTA zoned lands).

Whistler's residentially zoned lands are generally situated within a nodal development pattern along Highway 99 which has helped to preserve green space between neighbourhoods and facilitate access to adjacent natural areas, the Valley Trail system and public transit and services.

- [See the Whistler 2020 Services and Transit Proximity Indicator](#)
- [See the Whistler 2020 Dwelling Density Indicator](#)
- » **Commercial + Commercial Accommodation:** Commercially-zoned lands, including commercial tourist accommodation, make up 1% of Whistler's zoned land (251 hectares) but 22% of its developed area. A breakdown of commercial use in core commercial zones. Recent additions to the secondary commercial nodes identified within the OCP (Whistler Creek, Nesters Square, Alpine) include future local commercial space within the Athlete Centre at Cheakamus Crossing as well as at Rainbow²⁵, intended to serve a neighbourhood-scale commercial function.
- » **Parks + Protected Areas:** Community and neighbourhood leisure parks managed for recreation use, natural open spaces, protected areas and conservation buffer zones account

²³ Developed area, per the Whistler2020 monitoring framework, includes all zoned land area except those zoned as parks, protected areas or extremely low density. Few roads, including Highway 99 are included in the calculation.

²⁴ Note that Residential Estate One (RSE1) lands are not considered 'developed' per the Whistler 2020 Developed Area Indicator metrics.

²⁵ Current CD1 Zone for Rainbow allows for commercial maximum gross floor area of 2,100 m² (1,900m² for local commercial including grocery store, personal service, restaurant and pub; 100 m² for office and 100m² service station).

for 2% of Whistler's land base, or 513 hectares²⁶. This includes 103 hectares of PAN1 (Protected Area Network) zoned lands, comprising the Whistler Nature Reserve, Emerald Forest and Golden Dreams conservation areas, Stonebridge protected area and Alpha Creek wetlands.

- » **Institutional:** Institutional zoned lands (total 8 hectares) permitting schools, churches and community facilities represent 0.03% of the municipal area and 0.74% of Whistler's developed area.
- » **Industrial:** Whistler's industrial zoned lands (49 hectares; 0.2% of all municipal lands or approximately 6% of all developed land²⁷) permit industrial processing (30 ha)²⁸ on the South Cheakamus bench and at Cougar Mountain, industrial service (10 ha) and light industry (6 ha) primarily in Function Junction, as well as auxiliary industrial (2 ha; Function industrial storage, vehicle parking and impound yard) and lands zoned for utility use (1 ha; Brandywine Hydro facility). *Light industrial and service commercial lands totaling 2 hectares were added in Function Junction with the recent rezoning for a commercial service station and light-industrial/service commercial use (Resort Land Trust—First Nations Legacy Lands) in 2010.*

²⁶ This figure does not include all existing dedicated parks or open space areas that have alternative zoning e.g. Blueberry Hill Park 28.4 ha (LUC).

²⁷ Percentage total of developed industrial lands includes 23 hectares at the BC Transit Maintenance Facility on Nesters Rd. These lands are zoned RSE1, but as RSE1 lands are considered 'undeveloped' per the Whistler 2020 indicator metrics, the Transit Facility was removed from the RSE1 total for this particular calculation to reflect actual developed area.

²⁸ Industrial processing (IP zone) uses include material extraction and processing at the Whistler Aggregate property (southwest of Cheakamus Crossing), bio-filtration at the Municipally-owned land north of Cheakamus Crossing, as well as at the Indian Head Rock Quarry north of Emerald.

PRELIMINARY SEPTEMBER 14 2010

Land Use Distribution By Zone (2010)		Total Area (ha):	24,378	Municipal Land Area
Zones	Hectares	%		
Rural Resource Lands				
Minimum Lot Size 40 ha (RR1), 4,047m2 (RR2), 4 ha (RR4)	RR1*	22,074	90.55%	
Minimum Lot Size 4,047m2 (RR2), 4 ha (RR4)	RR2, RR4	9	0.04%	
*includes Hwy99/BC Rail Corridor		22,083	90.59%	
Residential				
Very Low Density (Detached)				
Minimum Lot Size 40 ha (RSE1)	RSE1-RSE7	890	3.65%	
Low/Medium Density (Detached)				
Minimum Lot Size 695m2 SF (RS1, RS2, RT1, RT2), 836 m2 Duplex (RT1, RT2)	RS1-RS9 + RT1-RT8 (incl Cheakamus R-LCCD Residential parcels)	367	1.50%	
Medium Density (Multiple)				
Minimum Lot Size Range: 986m2 -- 5000m2 (RM7only)	RM1-RM55 + LNR + CD1 (Rainbow) + R-LCCD (Cheakamus residential parcels + future residential reserve)	133	0.55%	
		1,390	5.70%	
Residential Tourist-Accommodation		RTA1-RTA28 + RM14	87	0.36%
Commercial*				
Mixed-Use Commercial	CC1, CC2, CC3, CM, P1, LNP + Future Cheakamus Residential Live-Work	41	0.17%	
Local Convenience	CL, CS, LC	4	0.01%	
Athlete Centre (Cheakamus Crossing)	AC1, AC2, AC3, P2	3	0.01%	
Commercial Accommodation				
Tourist Accommodation	TA + TV2	36	0.15%	
Hotel Accommodation	HA	2	0.01%	
Lodge Accommodation	LA	1	0.00%	
Commercial Residential	CR	2	0.01%	
Bed + Breakfast, Pension	TB, TP	4	0.02%	
Land Use Contract Areas (LUC)	LUC	158	0.65%	
*includes associated parking; Rainbow Neighbourhood Commercial is not included here (Comprehensive Development Zone shown in Med-Density Residential Figure)		251	1.03%	
Parks + Protected Areas				
Leisure Park	LP1-LP4	338	1.39%	
Recreation	LR1-LR9 + LHT1, LF1	65	0.27%	
Leisure Conservation Buffer	LCB1	7	0.03%	
Protected Areas	PAN1	103	0.42%	
		513	2.10%	
Institutional		IC1-IC2, ISC1, ID1, IF1	8	0.03%
Industrial				
Industrial Service	IS1, IS3, IS4, IS5	10	0.04%	
Industrial Processing	IP1, IP2	30	0.12%	
Light Industrial (incl light industrial-residential)	IL + ILR	6	0.03%	
Industrial Utility	IU1	1	0.00%	
Industrial Auxiliary	IA1	2	0.01%	
		49	0.20%	
TOTAL		24,378	100%	

Table 3. Land Use Distribution by Zone (2010)

PRELIMINARY SEPTEMBER 14 2010

Total Developed Area By Use (2010)	1,135 Developed Land	
	Hectares	%
Residential ¹	685	60.41%
Residential Tourist-Accommodation	87	7.70%
Commercial	47	4.18%
Commercial Accommodation	203	17.92%
Parks & Recreation ²	31	2.71%
Institutional	8	0.74%
Industrial ³	72	6.35%
Total Developed Area	1,135	100%
	<i>Developed Area</i>	<i>1,135</i>
	<i>Undeveloped Area</i> ⁴	<i>23,243</i>
	<i>Total Municipal Area</i>	<i>24,378</i>
		<i>4.65%</i>
		<i>95.35%</i>
		<i>100%</i>

Notes

¹ Excludes RR1, RR2, RR4 + RSE1 Lands (extremely low-density)

² Excludes Leisure Park 1-3, PAN1, Leisure Conservation Buffer + Leisure Recreation 3 Zones. Total developed recreation area includes Whistler Sliding Centre: 21 ha (zoned RR1)

³ Includes BC Transit Maintenance Facility: 23 ha (zoned RES1)

⁴ Total undeveloped area includes the following zones per the Whistler 2020 indicator: RR1, RR2, RR4, RSE1, PAN 1, LR3, LP1, LP2, LP3, LCB1

Table 4. Total Developed Area by Land Use (2010)

EXISTING LAND USE PLANS & POLICIES

This section details existing municipal plans and policies that establish the land use planning context for Whistler.

Comprehensive Development Plan (1993)

Goals + Objectives

In 1993, Council adopted the comprehensive Development Plan (CDP), which summarized the overall goals and strategy for the development and management of the community and the resort. The CDP served as a Council policy statement, informing and implemented by Whistler's 1993 OCP Bylaw and Zoning & Parking Bylaw. The Plan summarized and coordinated major municipal policies and initiatives to guide and regulate development, protect the natural environment, provide services, maintain a high quality of life in the community and continue to offer a high quality resort experience. The plan also directly influenced municipal initiatives such as capital expenditures planning, parks and recreation planning, services and transportation planning and others.

The CDP presented the basic goals for the kind of community and resort that Whistler aimed to be.

The CDP was founded on seven main goals:

1. To provide a high quality of life for those who live in Whistler and to provide a high calibre experience for those who visit and use the resort, by balancing the environmental, economic, and social needs of the community and the resort.
2. To maintain the high quality of the natural and built environments.
3. To continue to improve the community, recognizing that this is an important aspect of enhancing the resort.
4. To expand and diversify the local economy by continuing to increase visitation to the resort and by allowing other kinds of economic activity that are compatible with the resort.
5. To adopt an approach to growth management and development planning that is consistent with other goals for the resort and the community.
6. To plan for the long-term development of the resort and the region.
7. To take a more active role in planning for the future of the region surrounding Whistler.

Whistler's current Growth Management Strategy is also contained within the municipality's 1993 CDP. The CDP stipulated that at that time, there was significant remaining approved and undeveloped capacity for all forms of development, and there appeared to be little need to further increase the ultimate size of Whistler, except under extraordinary circumstances. The plan called for a cautious approach, to make use of this "breathing room" to comprehensively monitor and consider future resort development, land use, transportation, infrastructure planning and expenditures, recognizing that *"...addressing the long term future of Whistler will be a major undertaking on the part of the municipality, the mountain companies, provincial agencies and the community."*

Since its adoption, Whistler has used the CDP Growth Management Strategy policies and community criteria (which were implemented within the 1993 OCP Bylaw) to focus and manage resort community growth and ongoing community development initiatives. Whistler's long term planning has evolved into the community-led development of Whistler2020. Through this, many policy objectives outlined in the CDP have been substantially realized.

- » **Resident housing:** the Bed Unit cap was increased through the development of Whistler2020 for the provision of resident-restricted housing. A target of housing 75% of Whistler's workforce in the resort community was included in Whistler2020, with that target being exceeded in 2009 at 77%²⁹.
- » **Annual resort community monitoring and reporting:** the Whistler2020 monitoring, reporting and action planning process tracks and reports community-developed indicators on an annual basis. The semi-annual Community Life Survey is also ongoing. The municipality has also maintained its accommodation capacity and non-residential land use inventories.
- » **Continued development of resort amenities:** Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains merged under Intrawest ownership and the RMOW worked hand in hand with provincial agencies and mountain operators to increase on-mountain capacity, services and infrastructure. The Whistler Mountain Bike Park, other valley-based mountain bike infrastructure and other resort products have been developed. The Whistler Conference Centre underwent a large renovation and upgrade.

²⁹ Source: 2009 Whistler 2020 Monitoring Report to Council Nov 2, 2010.

Official Community Plan (1993)

Whistler's most recent OCP, adopted by Council as Bylaw 1021, 1993, establishes the legal framework for the regulation of land use and development within the Resort Municipality, and contains specific land use policies to implement the general goals for the resort community articulated by the 1993 CDP. These policies address overall resort community capacity and growth management, residential and commercial accommodation, resident housing, commercial development, business, service commercial and light industrial lands, community facilities, education, parks and recreation and municipal services, transportation and natural areas.

Development Areas + Development Permit Area Guidelines

Areas designated for development (along with associated municipal servicing and supply areas) are set out in the OCP. These development area designations establish a hierarchy of commercial nodes (primary village and secondary neighbourhood serving commercial), as well as accommodation areas, industrial lands, and community facilities. The OCP also identifies environmentally sensitive and development constraint areas, as well as development permit areas subject to guidelines for the protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity; hazardous conditions; or form and character of development. Consistent with the OCP, the use and development of any given property within the municipality is further governed by its *zoning* and any additional land use regulations, restrictive covenants or other development controls that may specifically apply.

Resort Community Capacity

With respect to overall resort community capacity, historically, Whistler's OCPs have instituted a progression of policies that have placed limits on development (as described in the *Current Context* section, *Table 1*). Initially, OCP policies were established to limit Whistler's size and overall scale to be consistent with infrastructure capacity, highway capacity and lift capacity. Later, these policies limited Whistler's development capacity in recognition of the potential impacts of additional development on Whistler's natural environment and quality of experience. Whistler's growth management policies and limits on development capacity have also been effectively utilized to target and achieve the types of development desired by Whistler as it has evolved to become a world class four season destination resort community.

Criteria for OCP Amendments for Additional Development

In 1993 the OCP established evaluation criteria for additional development approvals that would increase the bed unit capacity of the Municipality, in response to concerns over the changes that would result as the resort community grew from its existing developed capacity (estimated at approximately 30,000 bed units) to the already committed capacity (estimated at approximately 52,600 bed units):

"Proposed amendments to the OCP or Zoning Bylaw, especially those which would significantly increase the accommodation capacity within the existing Municipal boundaries, will only be approved under very special circumstances, and must comply with the criteria under this section (OCP Section 4.13)".

Any proposed OCP amendment or rezoning that would increase the municipality's bed unit capacity above the existing potential development capacity at the time would only be considered if the development:

- a) provides clear and substantial benefits to the community and the resort;
- b) is supported by the community, in the opinion of Council;
- c) will not cause unacceptable impacts on the community, resort, or environment; and
- d) meets all applicable criteria set out in the Official Community Plan." (OCP Section 4.13.2)

The 1993 OCP further imposed a series of mandatory conditions for proposed development, as well as additional requirements for business, service commercial or light industrial uses, campground and recreational uses, and resident housing.

Mandatory conditions included:

- Capacity for servicing by municipal water, sewer and fire protection services; local road accessibility; compliance with OCP policies; compliance with applicable environmental impact assessment process; exhibition of high standards of design, landscaping and environmental sensitivity (OCP Section 4.13.3).

Additional requirements addressed:

- High standards of quality/appearance, overall form and character, signage, access, terrain suitability, excessive noise or odors;
- Resident housing affordability, preference for infill sites, special housing needs, form and character, resident restrictions, and requirements for seasonal, short-term and permanent resident housing (proximity to the Village, parks, community facilities, mix of housing form, storage and parking etc); and,
- Impacts on municipal trails, recreation, and open space areas.
- (OCP Sections 4.13.4—4.13.8)

Since 1993, this suite of policies, evaluation criteria and development ‘checklists’ have guided municipal staff and successive Councils in the review of OCP and zoning amendments.

Land Use-Specific Policies

The OCP articulates specific policies and objectives for the residential and commercial accommodation, commercial lands, business, service commercial and light industrial development, as well as community facilities and education, parks and recreation, municipal services, transportation, and natural areas.

The following highlights key policy directions by land use type; a full summary of specific policies is available in the OCP Bylaw itself. Note that *all development is to be in conformance with formal OCP evaluation criteria (Section 4.13 described above)*.

Residential + Commercial Accommodation Policies

The OCP designated accommodation development congruent with residential areas throughout the Municipality (1993 OCP Schedule B1-B4 Development Areas), but primarily focused commercial accommodation within Whistler Village, Whistler Creek and the Blackcomb Bench. Consistent with the CDP and the desire to make use of the short-term ‘breathing room’ afforded by the considerable remaining approved development capacity at that time, the 1993 OCP required that development of accommodation on any other lands (other than that permitted by zoning in effect at the date of adoption of the OCP) be evaluated in accordance with Section 4.13 (outlined above) to determine clear and substantial benefits to the community and the resort.

Resident Housing Policies

The focus of existing OCP resident housing policy is on the delivery of a range of affordable resident housing, favouring approaches that involve “minimal intervention and restriction”. Criteria for the development of resident housing were set out in Section 4.13.7 to ensure affordability as a prime consideration in project proposal evaluation. Criteria included preference for infill sites, identified

special needs for resident housing, appropriate site form and character complimenting neighbouring uses and terrain, as well as the requirement for employee use restrictions. Further, additional criteria was established for proposals targeting *short-term resident housing* (proximity to Whistler Village/Whistler Creek; provision of rental accommodation, apartment or townhouse units; suitable storage and parking etc) versus employee housing targeted at *semi-permanent or permanent residents* (proximity to parks and community facilities, provide ownership opportunities, comprise mix of housing types including single family and duplex, integration into existing residential neighbourhoods, and be proven affordable to permanent residents).

Within the OCP, the Municipality committed to:

- » Monitor growth rates of commercial development, commercial accommodation and skier capacity in conjunction with the availability of affordable resident housing (Policy 4.2.1)
 - » Encourage the construction of affordable housing to accommodate permanent residents and employees when there is a demonstrated need (Policy 4.2.2)
- as well as to monitor community housing requirements and:
- » Identify land requirements for potential resident housing sites and preserve and protect potential community housing sites wherever possible, in accordance with the criteria in section 4.13.7 (Policy 4.2.3)
 - » Consider a variety of housing types and encourage innovative housing approaches to meet the needs of permanent, semi-permanent, and seasonal residents in the Municipality (Policy 4.2.4), and
 - » Support and encourage auxiliary residential accommodation as a source of resident accommodation (Policy 4.2.5).

The Municipality formally articulated its support for medium density housing in the Callaghan Valley or on the South Cheakamus Bench to accommodate the needs of Whistler residents under an OCP amendment in 2003³⁰, stating that “the development of resident housing shall only occur as supported by the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan... [and] shall be guided by a detailed planning review, including the preparation of development permit guidelines by the Municipality.” (Policy 4.2.6).

Commercial Policies

The focus of existing OCP commercial policy is on supporting Whistler’s core commercial precincts (Whistler Village, Blackcomb and Creekside) to reinforce Whistler’s development strategy that promotes compact, centralized uses that are cost effective for servicing and operation and avoids ‘sprawling’ strip commercial development within Whistler Valley. The OCP states that only limited commercial is permitted outside these areas for local convenience provided they are well-designed and scaled to meet needs of immediate area. Nesters Square is recognized as expanded convenience commercial area and may be developed at scale to meet day-to-day needs of resort community.

The OCP further states that:

- » Restaurant and licensed premises and retail space focused in commercial areas; these commercial areas may also contain office uses (Policy 4.3.1)
- » Commercial retail and service facilities scaled to meet day to day needs of residents and visitors may be located in expanded convenience commercial area (Policy 4.3.2)

³⁰ OCP Amendment Bylaw (Cheakamus South and Callaghan Resident Housing Option Sites) No. 1614, 2002 was adopted on February 17, 2003.

- » Other commercial development is to be limited to small amounts of space for local convenience commercial uses, personal service, and food and beverage associated with commercial accommodation. Uses should be scale do meet needs of immediate area and should not adversely affect commercial uses in Whistler Village, Blackcomb Bench or Whistler Creek (Policy 4.3.3)
- » The amount and pattern of commercial development should be reviewed to determine necessary revisions to commercial policies (Policy 4.3.4)

Business, Service Commercial and Light Industrial Policies

The existing OCP recognizes the need for office, service commercial and light industrial uses appropriate and desirable to Whistler and not suitable for the main commercial center. Only Function Junction is designated for these uses; the OCP goes on to say that this area is expected to provide for a wide range of uses, which in some cases have conflicting requirements.

The OCP contemplates the need for additional lands provided they do not detract from the image and quality of the resort. Criteria for a future site or sites designated for industrial development are presented (site area able to accommodate existing heavy industrial uses and some expansion; location without adverse visual impacts; in the south of the Municipality in proximity to Function Junction; and proximity to Highway) (Policy 4.4.1). The OCP calls for heavy industry to be encouraged to relocate to an industrial site once designated in consultation with the community. Further:

- » Function Junction to be designated as general purpose business district for preferred location for service commercial, wholesale, retail, office, light industrial uses inappropriate for Whistler Village and Creekside). Residential uses to remain as auxiliary for caretaker and security purposes (Policy 4.4.3)
- » RMOW will consider designating a site for high quality business park development to accommodate office uses and businesses that can diversify local economy and limited retail/service use (Policy 4.4.4)
- » Material extraction is limited to areas designated on OCP Schedule D and industrial material extraction is only permitted if carried out in accordance with appropriate provisions in the OCP (Policy 4.4.5).

Community Facilities + Education Policies

The 1993 OCP policy focus for the provision of community, cultural and education facilities included the continued emphasis on community needs as amenities and facilities associated with committed development projects were constructed. The OCP called for the need to:

- » monitor community facility requirements and identify land requirements, and preserve sites to accommodate required community and cultural facilities (Policy 4.5.1)
- » monitor community requirements and plan lands which the Municipality owns to maximize efficiency and to respond to community and cultural priorities (Policy 4.5.2)

Designated cultural facilities were to be located primarily in the Whistler Village, Blackcomb and Whistler Creek areas, and in conjunction with other community facilities (Policy 4.5.3). Further, Whistler Village was identified as the designated location for the resort community library (Policy 4.5.4). Under the OCP, the Municipality is to encourage:

- » The location of all appropriate federal and provincial government agencies within Whistler Village or in a designated business park (Policy 4.5.7) as well as,

- » the maintenance of community health care and social service facilities in Whistler Village, and [to] support the development of additional health care and social service facilities as needed (Policy 4.5.8)

The designation of adequate and suitable sites for the development of churches (Policy 4.5.5) and the development of additional preschool and day care facilities in the Municipality as needed (Policy 4.5.6) were also encouraged.

The Education policy focus is to ensure that a wide range of educational opportunities and supporting facilities are locally available. The OCP called for:

- » The Municipality to work with the School District in the development of educational facilities (including the existing and proposed schools shown on Schedule E), and assist in securing additional school sites as required (Policy 4.6.1)
- » The development of additional preschool and day care facilities for children in the Municipality (Policy 4.6.2)
- » Consideration of post secondary education institutions (Policy 4.6.3) and private education facilities, which will enhance the community and the resort (Policy 4.6.4)

The following policy highlights concern land use-specific directions pertinent to the development of a future land use plan for the updated OCP. A more comprehensive summary of the overall policy objectives for the following land use categories can be found in the associated Background Reports for specific OCP Chapter areas: Quality of Life, Natural Areas, and Transportation and Utilities.

Parks + Recreation *See also *Quality of Life Backgrounder*

The OCP policy focus for parks and recreation lands are the development and maintenance of Whistler's park and trail system, recreation areas and facilities. Planning that addresses community needs and tourism-related recreational and cultural facilities and maintains a balance between the built and natural environment and recreation demands of resort and the needs of community is recognized as a key priority.

Relevant Land Use Policies:

- » Develop and maintain a parks and trail system, bicycle paths and recreation areas and facilities generally shown in Schedule F and within its resources (Policy 4.7.1)
- » Where possible, maximize public access to important lakes and creeks; acquire waterfront properties and crown lands for development for local and public parks purposes; continue to develop a comprehensive network of trails which link provincial and Municipal parks, beach areas, the alpine environment, and recreation areas outside of the Municipal boundaries; and continue to develop a network of bicycle paths (Policy 4.7.2)
- » Maintain an open space system as shown on Schedule F, which categorizes land according to its recreation potential and seeks to preserve environmental amenities and minimize conflicts between development (Policy 4.7.3)

The OCP also calls for park dedication as part of the development approval process: "Upon subdivision, lands shown as recreation area, trail system or open space on Schedule F may be required to be dedicated as park in accordance with, and to the extent permitted by, the Municipal Act" (Policy 4.7.4)

Heritage Resources *See also *Quality of Life Backgrounder*

Land use-related OCP policies for the preservation, promotion and management of heritage resources considered to have economic, social, cultural, educational and aesthetic benefit include:

- » Creation of a Community Heritage registry to be used as a reference for bylaws, policies and permits respecting conservation of these resources (Policy 4.8.1)
- » Conduct comprehensive reviews of historically-significant heritage sites and establish priorities for the preservation and management of each site (Policy 4.8.3)
- » Provide incentives to private property owners to retain the heritage value of their lands and structures (Policy 4.8.4)

Natural Environment *See also *Natural Areas Backgrounder for Comprehensive Summary*

The OCP recognizes environmental protection as a prime objective in all future planning and development within the Municipality and states that all future development must be sensitive to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and must reflect rigorous environmental design standards.

Example land use-related OCP policies for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment include (but are not limited to):

- » Restrict or prohibit the development of lands subject to severe geologic hazards (Policy 4.12.2); or development that would adversely affect water quantity or quality used for domestic or recreational water supply purposes (Policies 4.12.3 / 4.12.4 / 4.12.5)
- » Require geotechnical and hydrologic assessment of all public and private development proposals lying within a floodplain or along a watercourse, and/or potentially impacted by a site specific hydrologic hazard(s) (Policy 4.12.1) and require minimum buffer zones adjacent to all significant watercourses (identified in Schedule I) in which natural vegetation must be undisturbed and preserved (Policy 4.12.6)
- » Require that all development incorporates adequate drainage detention/retention facilities to ensure that there will be no or minimal net increase in downstream runoff (Policy 4.12.8)
- » All developments, other than ski lifts and directly related facilities, on lands where 40% or more of the gross parcel area is in excess of 30% slope, may be subject to guidelines or policies adopted as Council policy for development on difficult terrain (Policy 4.12.9)
- » Prohibit any development, other than ski lift and directly related recreation facilities, in sub-alpine environments (Policy 4.12.10)
- » Explore alternatives to the Squamish/Pemberton valley corridor for further major transmission lines and relocate existing transmission lines where possible to reduce or eliminate visual impacts on highways and recreation areas in the Municipality (Policy 4.12.15)
- » Maintain high visual quality along Highway 99 by, wherever possible, requiring a 20 metre vegetated buffer to be retained on lands that abut the highway right of way (Policy 4.12.16).

Whistler's current OCP also established an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the review of OCP amendments, rezoning or development permit applications. The OCP calls for partnership with provincial and federal government agencies and incorporation of appropriate government guidelines and regulations in its EIA framework and regulations such that OCP policies are respected when making decisions on resource exploration or use (Policy 4.12.11) and the scenic quality and biophysical resources of the Municipality and surrounding lands are protected (Policies 4.12.12 / 4.12.13).

Municipal Services + Transportation *See also *Transportation & Utilities Backgrounder*

Land use-related OCP policies for municipal services and transportation infrastructure focus on maintaining adequate capacity to service existing and planned development committed under the 1993 OCP. Services policies specifically address water quality and conservation, wastewater treatment and solid waste disposal, and stormwater management. Existing OCP transportation policies address the local and regional transportation system and facilities to serve the resort community, as well as the increasing emphasis on providing and supporting alternative transportation modes.

Whistler 2020 Moving Towards a Sustainable Future

In 2004, Council adopted the Whistler2020 Comprehensive Sustainability Plan. Whistler2020 is Whistler's shared vision and long-term, community-developed and implemented action plan for continued sustainability and success. This "living" plan and policy framework, along with associated community performance monitoring, has influenced strategic planning and local decision-making related to resort community development. Whistler 2020 has served as a prelude to this latest phase of community planning (the 2010 OCP update) and provides the necessary foundation to inspire and align OCP policy as Whistler manages a largely developed resort community and continues to work towards its vision.

As high-level policy, Whistler2020 contains additional criteria to effectively evaluate whether proposed OCP and zoning amendments bring the community *towards or further away from* our Vision and Descriptions of Success in the 17 focused strategy areas. The seventeen Whistler2020 strategy areas and associated Descriptions of Success (DOS) provide more specific direction to inform how Whistler may address future land use and manage growth and development. The DOS were refined by the Whistler 2020 Task Forces in 2010.

The following DOS statements presented in bold relate to resort community capacity, growth management and land use issues.

Built Environment. In 2020, Whistler's built environment is vibrant, reflects the community's character, contributes to individual health and wellbeing, and is moving toward its identified sustainability objectives. By this time:

- 1. Limits to growth are understood, defined, and respected**
- 2. The built environment is attractive and vibrant, reflecting an evolving resort community character, protecting viewscales and evoking a strong sense of place**
3. Visitors and residents can readily immerse themselves in nature
- 4. Whistler Village is the core of the resort community**
5. Community spaces encourage personal interaction and shared activities
6. The built environment is safe and accessible for people of all abilities, anticipating and accommodating wellbeing needs and satisfying visitor expectations
- 7. Encroachment on nature by the built environment is avoided**
- 8. Residents can live, work and play in relatively compact, mixed-use neighborhoods that reflect Whistler's character and integrate green space, transit, trails, amenities and services**

9. Lifecycle building design³¹, construction and operation is characterized by efficiency, durability and flexibility.
- 10. The new and renovated built environment exemplifies sustainable management of energy and materials**
11. Landscaped areas minimize the need for watering and eliminate chemical use
12. Streamlined policies, incentives, regulations and programs have helped to achieve green sustainable management of energy and materials in the built environment.
13. Building tenure and governance processes, such as the strata property ownership model, are updated to facilitate and encourage a rapid transition towards a more flexible and sustainable built environment
14. Whistler's building sector contributes to the local economy and showcases innovation and leadership in sustainable building practices
15. The built environment protects quiet spaces and the night sky from light intrusion
16. Whistler's built environment is recognized as a centre of excellence in sustainable community development

Economic. In 2020, Whistler has a healthy and unique tourism economy that provides a quality of life, which attracts and retains community members. By this time:

- 1. Whistler has a strong, diverse, and year-round economy that is complimentary to and supportive of tourism.**
2. Whistler is a great place for current and future investors to achieve a competitive return on investment.
- 3. Whistler's resort economy is progressive and ensures a balanced and effective use of limited financial, social, and natural resources in the long-term**
- 4. Whistler proactively seizes economic opportunities that are compatible with tourism, and effectively adapts to changing external conditions on a timely basis.**
5. Locally owned and operated businesses thrive and are encouraged as an essential component of a healthy business mix
- 6. Whistler holds competitive advantage in the destination resort marketplace as a result of its vibrancy and unique character, products and services**
7. Products and services that offer high value to users drive Whistler's economic activities
8. A skilled workforce supports the local economy, and the local economy supports the skilled workforce
- 9. Physical and social infrastructure attract and support work and investment**
- 10. Whistler has a warm bed policy that is protected to support tourism.**
- 11. Effective partnerships with public, tourism, and business organizations encourage, facilitate, and support economic health.**
12. The Whistler resort community shares resources and works together to be competitive and successful.
- 13. Whistler is an integral part of the region's economy and works collaboratively with stakeholders**
14. NEW: Investment in business and infrastructure is facilitated and encouraged in an efficient and effective way.

³¹ Buildings are designed not only to minimize resource consumption and waste during construction and operation, but to be deconstructed in a way that minimizes waste and facilitates recycling and reuse.

Natural Areas. In 2020, Whistler protects and, where possible, restores ecosystem integrity and biodiversity in all critical natural areas, and also protects and restores natural features within Whistler's developed and recreational areas. By this time:

1. **An ecologically functioning and viable network of natural areas is protected and, restored where gaps occur**
2. **Degradation of critical natural areas is avoided**
3. **Indigenous biodiversity is maintained**
4. **The protected natural areas throughout the Corridor include a full spectrum of locally representative ecosystems**
5. **Backcountry areas are protected from overuse and degradation**
6. Community members and visitors are educated about the natural environment and act as stewards
7. Continual learning about natural areas and species informs appropriate restoration and protection efforts
8. **Corridor partners adopt Natural Areas Strategies consistent with the intent of this document**
9. **Natural systems guide management approaches**
10. **NEW: Strategies for restoring degraded ecosystems are identified and implemented.**
11. **NEW: The existence of invasive species in Whistler is eliminated and prevented.**

Resident Housing. In 2020, Whistler has an inventory of housing that is affordable and sustainable, supporting a diverse and vibrant local population. In the future:

1. Resident housing is affordable for permanent and short-term residents, through innovative and effective policy and financial models
2. Effective financial and legal tools and policies exist to develop and manage resident restricted housing affordability in perpetuity
3. **The planned flexibility within neighbourhood design, housing form, and housing tenure enables the adaptability to meet changing housing needs and future affordability considerations**
4. **Whistler has a sufficient quantity and appropriate mix of quality housing to meet the needs of diverse residents (Target: a minimum of 75% of Whistler employees live in the resort community)**
5. Residents enjoy housing in mixed-use neighbourhoods that are intensive, vibrant and include a range of housing forms
6. Housing has been developed close to transit, pedestrian and bicycle routes, and amenities and services to reduce auto dependency
7. Housing is healthy and livable, and housing design, construction and operations are continuously improving toward sustainable and efficient energy and materials management
8. Developed areas are designed and managed to be sensitive to the surrounding environment

Transportation. In 2020, transportation to, from and within Whistler is convenient, safe, seamless, and affordable. By this time:

1. **Whistler policy, planning and development prioritizes preferred methods of transportation of people and goods in the following order: 1. pedestrian, bicycle and other non-motorized means, 2. Mass transit, 3. private motor vehicles (High Occupancy Vehicle, and leading low-impact technologies), 4. private motor vehicles (Single Occupancy Vehicle, traditional technology)**

2. **Transportation preferences and options are developed, promoted and supported by all transportation partners so that inter-community mobility minimizes the negative impacts of traditional modes of travel**
3. **The convenience and seamlessness of the preferred transportation system to, from and within Whistler ensures usage rates continue to rise**
4. Whistler's transportation system is transitioning toward renewable energy sources, improving air quality, and minimizes encroachment on nature.
5. Regional partnerships enhance the journey to the resort as part of the experience
6. Residents, businesses and visitors are increasingly aware of the preferred transportation options, their benefits and the importance of individual choices.
7. The transportation system efficiently meets both the short- and long-term needs of all users
8. Whistler's transportation system is safe and enjoyable
9. **The preferred transportation systems to, from and within the resort community are accessible and offer affordable travel options**

Visitor Experience. Under Visitor Experience, one key Description of Success is applicable:

1. **A comfortable carrying capacity of the resort, its amenities, and the surrounding natural environment is respected**
2. **The resort community's authentic sense of place and engaging, innovative and renewed offerings attract visitors time and time again**

Regional Plans and Policies

SLRD Regional Growth Strategy

In September 2008, Council accepted the Squamish Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw³². The SLRD Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is a long-term plan and agreement that deals with growth management and economic recovery issues over a 20-year period for the SLRD area. Developed and approved by the member municipalities in partnership with the regional district, the RGS is intended to guide the SLRD and its member municipalities with respect to land use decisions in accordance with their legislative authority. The RGS will be primarily implemented through municipal OCPs and zoning bylaws. Under the Local Government Act, the RMOW is required to include a Regional Context Statement within the OCP.

The RGS is based on eleven Smart Growth principles collaboratively developed and endorsed by the SLRD and member municipalities and included within the RGS Memorandum of Understanding. These principles are about avoiding urban and rural sprawl, compact complete neighbourhoods and communities, low-impact transportation options, affordable housing, economic sustainability, protection and stewardship of natural areas, the integrity of food and forestry land base, energy-efficient infrastructure and public involvement respecting community values/visions as well as collaboration between governments, agencies and First Nations.

Further, the RGS articulates nine complimentary goals to strategically address growth management challenges, including: focusing on compact development, improving transportation linkages and options, supporting range of affordable housing, achieving sustainable economy, protecting ecosystem functioning, encouraging sustainable use of parks and natural areas, creating healthy, safe

³² The RGS Bylaw No 1062, 2008 was prepared by the SLRD in consultation with local, regional, provincial and federal governments, the public and First Nations, which began in earnest in 2004. Formal adoption of the bylaw is pending.

communities, enhancing relations with Aboriginal communities, and improving collaboration among jurisdictions. Both the RGS principles and goals are consistent with Whistler's vision as well as the municipality's overall approach to growth management. Preparation of the regional context statement for the OCP will highlight these common goals and objectives, ensuring a level of consistency between Whistler's OCP policy directions and the RGS.

Sea to Sky Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP)

Adopted by the Province in April 2008, the Sea to Sky Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), provides strategic direction for the management of public lands and natural resources within the plan area which covers almost 1.1 million hectares stretching from Lions Bay to D'Arcy.

The LRMP is built upon the outcomes of government-to-government discussions between the Province and First Nations, and on recommendations put forward by a public planning forum. Five years in the making, the LRMP provides direction for future planning and management of natural resources, and establishes specific land-use designations and a framework for resolving land-use issues. The plan integrates a diverse suite of values to reflect a balanced vision of how the land will be managed; it is intended to maintain the long-term sustainability of cultural and ecological values, and provide greater certainty for local economic development.

The LRMP is significant for Whistler because it demonstrates how communities can work together for a clear vision of the future. It was undertaken in order to provide greater certainty for local economic development and the long-term sustainability of ecological, social and cultural values and was developed to balance the economic, environmental, and social interests within the Plan Area.

The LRMP was built upon the recommendations of a public planning forum comprised of representatives from a variety of sectors, input from government agencies, and the outcomes of government-to-government agreements with the In-SUCH-ch, Lil'wat, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. The LRMP harmonizes these Nations' land use visions and plans with the Province's land use policy.

The LRMP included the creation of six new conservancy areas: Callaghan, 100 Lakes Plateau, Upper Soo, Upper Birkenhead, Twin Two and Cerise Creeks. The new conservancy areas protect biological and culturally important areas. Conservancies forbid industrial logging, mining, hydro-electric development, new roads and commercial development but allow for the province and local governments to agree on "acceptable uses ... that would otherwise contravene the LRMP.

The Sea-to-Sky LRMP lays out general management direction for values, such as water, wildlife, and recreation. It also identifies land use zones to guide the management of resources across the landscape:

- » The All Resource Uses Permitted Zone (47% of the Plan Area), where the range of resource uses and activities may be permitted, subject to existing legislation and policy. Within the All Resource Uses Permitted Zone, there are two sub-zones for which additional management direction applies:
 - The Frontcountry Area, which is the gateway through which all visitors to the region pass and where the majority of residents make their home. The Frontcountry Area follows the major transportation routes through the Plan Area from Lions Bay to D'arcy, and has very high visual quality and recreation values that are accounted for in the Area's management direction; and
 - Cultural Management Areas, which were identified through G2G agreements with First Nations. Within Cultural Management Areas, integrated resource management must be

conducted in a manner that is consistent with First Nations cultural values and ecological values. There are nine Cultural Management Areas in the Plan Area.

- » Wildland Zones (27% of the Plan Area), which are areas identified as having high First Nations cultural values, wildlife habitat values, and/or a remote and natural wilderness character. Within Wildland Zones, tourism and subsurface resource development may be permitted, but commercial forest harvesting and commercial power generation infrastructure (independent power projects, or IPPs) are not allowed. Wildland Zones have a Cultural, Recreation, Tourism, or Wildlife emphasis.
- » Protected Areas (existing parks and new Conservancies - 26% of the Plan Area), which are areas in which no industrial resource development activities are permitted, in order to protect the high values of these areas to First Nations and the public. The LRMP establishes eight new Conservancies in the Plan Area, which will be managed collaboratively by First Nations and the Province.

The LRMP is implemented by government agencies, both through specific projects and by ensuring development activities in the Plan Area follow the direction provided by the plan. Where appropriate, the LRMP is implemented through existing policy, or through the establishment of legal objectives or designations under relevant legislation such as the Land Act, Forest and Range Practices Act, or Park (Conservancy Enabling) Amendment Act.

Other Municipal Initiatives, Functional Policies, Agreements + Major Studies

Since 1993, a number of municipal initiatives, policies and agreements have been adopted by the RMOW to guide land use planning and development, in addition to Whistler 2020. Additional studies have also augmented the Municipality's understanding of a number of land-use specific issues and opportunities. These are detailed by land use topic area, as follows.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Residual Bed Unit + Growth Management Policy G-21

In 2005, an *interim* policy was adopted to formally recognize unutilized *residual*³³ bed units within the municipality's approved development cap and provide clarity around their status, treatment and use (Appendix A). The inventory of residual bed units represented room within the existing 'cap' that could be used to support the future resident housing, other community amenities and projects with extraordinary circumstances.

This policy response reflected a strong desire to stay within existing approved development cap while addressing priorities that were not currently provided for within that capacity (in alignment with existing 1993 OCP growth management policies). The policy formalized the treatment of residual bed units according to their status, as follows:

- » Tied to existing development site—these residual bed units are only available for future redevelopment of the property (Taluswood, Four Seasons Lot 5)
- » “Floating” Residuals—available for future development subject to rezoning approval (Whistler Mountain and Crown bed units)
- » Surplus available for Re-allocation—these residuals have been previously allocated within the approved development capacity but have not and will not be utilized (WHA bed units, municipal RR1 lands and municipal parklands)

This policy states that future proposals to add to the Municipality's development capacity are to be evaluated based on existing criteria specified in the OCP (see above). Any future rezoning proposal that requires market bed units that did not previously exist within the existing approved development cap must also be considered relative to the inventory of surplus bed units; HOWEVER approval shall not be dependant upon the availability of this surplus. *It was anticipated that the treatment of residual bed units would be reconsidered within the municipality's larger OCP/CDP growth management framework and next comprehensive OCP update.*

First Nations Legacy Land Agreement

On November 22, 2002, as part of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Agreement, the Squamish Nation and the Lil-wat Nation (the Nations), Province and the Vancouver 2010 Bid Corporation signed an agreement known as the “Partners Creating Shared Legacies”. This agreement identified 300 acres of lands for economic development and to be known collectively as the Legacy Lands.

On March 23, 2005, a Provincial LMU (Letter of Understanding) was executed between the Nations and Province concerning the Legacy Lands. On May 18, 2005 a Municipal LMU was executed between

³³ Residual bed units represent bed units that have been allocated within the 1993 OCP approved development capacity but not utilized. Residual bed units have resulted in certain circumstances where the original bed unit allocation changed due to revisions in the ultimate number and size of units constructed on the property, with renovations to existing developments within their zoning rights or with subdivision of large zoned parcels.

the Nations and the RMOW which expressed their respective intentions and formed the basis for the development of the Legacy Land Agreement.

In relation to a land use decision making process for the Legacy Lands the Municipal LMU outlined the following principles:

1. Whistler will be guided by Whistler 2020 and be consistent with the OCP;
2. Whistler's Council and Officers will consider the Squamish and Lil'Wat Nation's Land Use Plans when making land use decisions;
3. Whistler land use decisions will be made in compliance with the *Community Charter*, *Local Government Act*, other applicable provincial and Whistler enactments, and covenants granted in favour of Whistler and Whistler's other planning policies, guidelines and standards;
4. Land use decision making authority of Whistler Council's, approving officer, or any other Whistler officers making discretionary land use decisions cannot be fettered;
5. The Nations' Councils' discretionary decision making cannot be fettered;
6. Whistler and the nations will work collaboratively to support the tourism economy;
7. Development rights must be secured for any development proposal that involves new market housing; and
8. The Nations' Councils and any officers when making land use decisions affecting fee simple land held or occupied by the Nations or their nominees anywhere in the Squamish Lillooet Regional District will consider the Regional District Regional Growth Strategy.

In May 2007 the Legacy Land Agreement was signed by the Nations and the RMOW, which further resolved issues relating to the Legacy Lands between the parties including development rights for the Legacy Lands, the reallocation of Bed Units to the Nations and support by the Nations for a municipal boundary extension by Whistler. The agreement identified land use development issues in the following specific areas:

1. **Alpine North Lands**- RMOW to hold Alpine North Block 1 in fee simple and the Nations to hold Alpine North Block 2 in fee simple.
2. **Function Junction Area**- Nations to discuss with RMOW development opportunities for uses consistent with the OCP;
3. **Callaghan Valley Area** – RMOW and the Nations to investigate potential for tourism and resort related opportunities such as a golf course and outdoor recreation facilities to be developed by the Nations to service winter and summer recreational users;
4. **Green Lake Area** – the Nations acknowledge that the current RMOW OCP does not contemplate development of the Green Lake (Emerald West) area;
5. **Cougar Pit Lands** – the zoning for these lands as of the reference date of the Agreement permits the existing gravel pit land use but the Nations will discuss with RMOW potential long term development opportunities for these Lands;
6. **Resort Land Trust** – An amendment to the OCP to designate the Alpine North Block 2, the Function Junction Lands, the Callaghan Valley Area Lands, the Callaghan Valley Entrance Lands, the Green Lake Area and the Cougar Pit Lands as "Resort Land Trust" and a zoning amendment to permit development by the Nations of the Bed Units in relation to the Alpine North Block 2 Lands consistent with Resort Land Trust designation in the OCP;
7. **Nations Cultural Centre** – RMOW will from time to time consider bylaws to exempt from municipal property value tax the land and improvements comprising the centre apply to the Province for an exemption of these lands and improvements from school property tax, for as long as the land and improvements continue to be used only for the Nations Cultural Centre; and

8. **Bed Units allocation** – RMOW to consider rezoning applications made by the Nations in accordance with Whistler’s Residential Bed Units Policy and Growth Management adopted by RMOW Council on August 2, 2005. Under the Agreement this allocated 452 bed units to the Nations.

The guiding principles of the Legacy Land Agreement are:

1. Land use decisions in Whistler guided by Whistler 2020 and consistent with OCP;
2. Development subject to zoning;
3. Development rights must be secured for any development proposal involving new market housing;
4. Rezoning applications subject to Whistler’s policy for Residual Bed Units and Growth Management (Aug. 2, 2005) – 452 Bed Units allocated under agreement to First Nations for development subject to rezoning (have been allocated and utilized for Baxter Creek development), any further future development of First Nations lands to be considered by Whistler with the securing of Bed Units within the then existing Bed Unit cap.

Resort Land Trust Designation

In January 2009, a new Resort Land Trust (OCP) designation was adopted under OCP Amendment Bylaw 1846, 2008, which includes lands in the following 6 areas:

1. Alpine North Block 2 (future residential),
2. Function Junction (light industrial),
3. Callaghan Valley Area Lands (resort infrastructure),
4. Callaghan Valley Entrance Lands (rural resource usage),
5. Green Lake Area (rural resource usage), and
6. Cougar Pit lands (rural resource usage).

The lands in Alpine North and Function Junction have been rezoned for residential and commercial/light industrial respectively but are still undeveloped. The remaining lands above remain for potential development. The RMOW is committed to work with First Nations on use and development of Callaghan Valley Area Lands, Callaghan Valley Entrance Lands, Green Lake Area and Cougar Pit Lands.

COMMERCIAL

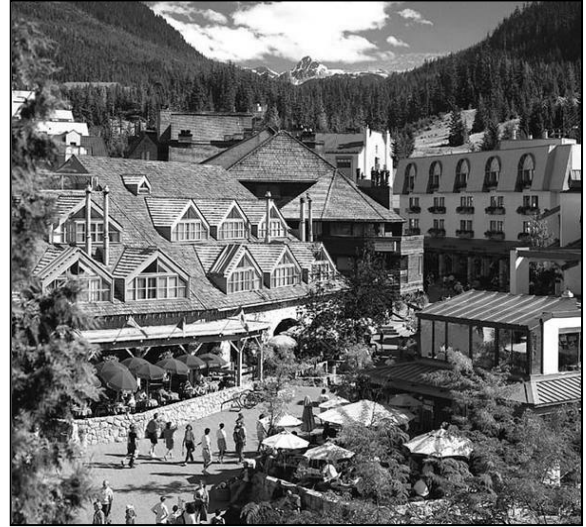
Whistler Village Enhancement Strategy/Policy 2001

Village enhancement was identified as a priority by Municipal Council for the 2001 and 2002 Work Program. Staff worked with a Village Enhancement Committee and community members to proactively identify and address issues and opportunities for enhancement. The resulting municipal policy document (Appendix B) provided a comprehensive strategy for establishing staff work programs, capital programs, and policies for guiding decision-making on proposed enhancement projects. Policy statements provide direction relative to the overall character and fundamental design principles for Whistler Village.

The strategy recognized the important role of the Village to the long term success of the resort community and represented a clear statement of the municipality’s commitment to the on-going evolution and enhancement of Whistler Village.

Five main factors were the impetus for development of the strategy:

1. To ensure Whistler Village adapts and evolves in harmony with the growth and evolution of the resort community;
2. To address maintenance issues related to the aging of the original Whistler Village area;
3. To enhance Whistler Village by pursuing unrealized opportunities related to the original planning, design and development of the Village;
4. To respond to increasing competition and a changing marketplace; and
5. To sustain the economic health and viability of Whistler Village businesses and properties and its important role within the resort community.



Whistler Village is a 'Trademark' of the resort.

The strategy aimed to achieve four broad goals for Whistler Village:

- » Reinforce Whistler Village's unique character and sense of place.
- » Provide a well-maintained, clean, safe and user-friendly environment.
- » Provide for an enriched, dynamic experience.
- » Establish and maintain collaborative efforts for continual enhancement.

Overall, the enhancement strategy sought to facilitate reinvestment and new investment in Whistler Village. This approach resulted in a number of major renovation projects including the Whistler Conference Centre, the Sundial Hotel (formerly Westbrook), Hilton Hotel (formerly Delta Mountain Inn), Blackcomb Lodge and the Crystal Lodge. New developments included the Blackcomb Lodge Gatehouse and Pan Pacific Mountainside. Enhancement projects were also completed for a number of business retail units and restaurant and patio spaces including Cittas, La Bocca/Amsterdam, Tapley's, Black's Pub, the St. Andrews water feature, and Moguls patio.

Accompanying the strategy was a municipal commitment to an annual implementation program dedicating municipal resources towards the enhancement effort. This commitment has carried forward on an annual basis, with an average annual capital budget of \$300,000 for enhancement projects. These projects have included public art, enhanced wayfinding, the market square playground structure, annual banner program, street furniture, public seating, festive lighting and accessibility improvements. Major capital projects have also been identified and undertaken including the Village Square enhancement, Breezeway arrival enhancement, and a major enhancement of Mountain Square slated for 2011/2012.

Whistler Village Density Policy

With the success of the Village enhancement initiative a number of proposed renovation projects tested the limits of the fundamental design principles and design guidelines for Whistler Village. Concerns related to requests for additional density and associated impacts on the Village experience, including the scale of the Village, the comfort of adjacent public spaces and connections to views, solar access and the mountain environment.

Council directed staff to establish limits to the density of development in the Village, which reflected the original Village Master Plan, development proposal calls, approved development permits and registered development covenants. A **CC1 Base Density Zoning** was adopted by the municipality to establish the permitted “base density” for each parcel in the CC1 zone (original Village area) to be the existing developed density as approved by building permit consistent with the historic plans and approvals. A small additional allowance of 20 square metres was granted for each parcel to allow small additions to proceed that support reinvestment in existing businesses and result in enhancement of Whistler Village.

Accompanying the rezoning, Council also adopted new OCP development permits guidelines for Whistler Village View and Solar Access Protection, as well as a Council policy that specifies the principles, policies and procedures by which the municipality will consider proposed renovation and redevelopment projects that request additional density beyond the established “base density”.

The new **View and Solar Access Protection Guidelines** established an objective approach to determining and evaluating potential impacts on these valued aspects of the Village experience. Critical views and solar access were defined, documented and prioritized through a comprehensive analysis. Analysis tools were developed to provide accurate and consistent assessments of potential impacts related to proposed renovations and redevelopments that modify the existing building envelope and associated scale, massing and form of the development. A three-dimensional computer model of the Village was developed for the solar access impact analysis, whereby proposed design concepts are prepared in three dimensions and inserted into the base model, to determine changes in solar access and shadowing on important public spaces. A photo-inventory was developed for critical views to be protected and their valued characteristics, within which proposed building modifications are to be inserted and rendered for evaluation.

The **CC1 Density Policy** (Council Policy G-24; Appendix C) that was adopted was developed through the deliberation of a Council-appointed Task Force with representatives from major property owners, the municipal Advisory Design Panel, Council representatives, community members and Eldon Beck. The Task Force established consensus on a number of principles concerning renovation and redevelopment of Village properties. Fundamentally the policy acknowledges that there are opportunities for improvements to existing development in Whistler Village that must be recognized as a community benefit and may involve changes to the volumetrics and density of a property. There are a number of buildings that were developed in the Village that do not have an appealing design and were not designed or built to last. These buildings and properties have the potential to be redeveloped in a way that enhances the visual quality of the Village, as well as achieve enhancements to building safety, the hospitality experience, operational efficiency, building durability and building efficiency. Select principles established by the policy include:

- » Recognize that improved properties enhance the resort experience, support increased visitation, and are a measurable benefit to the resort community.
- » Facilitate reinvestment in Whistler Village that enhances its quality and character, without negatively impacting the fundamental design principles of the original Whistler Village Master Plan.
- » Additional density should not be granted as a necessity or solution to making reinvestment and upgrades occur.
- » Recognize that the density for each parcel in Whistler Village is a function of location, context, site-specific characteristics and maintaining the fundamental design principles of Whistler Village, as established in the original Whistler Village Master Plan.

- » From a design, aesthetic and experiential perspective, building volumetrics (massing, height, shape, form, scale, relationships, views, solar access) are a more relevant measure of development density than gross floor area. Gross floor area should not be the singular focus.
- » There is limited potential to add additional density within Whistler Village; however, there are buildings that would be enhanced by modifications to their existing volumetrics.
- » Where additional development density is determined to be acceptable, any requirements for further public amenities should be based on a predictable process with clear guidelines.
- » Seek to add diversity to the accommodation mix.
- » Seek to support local unique businesses.
- » Achieve buildings that are “built to last” through quality design, materials and construction.
- » Recognize that in some cases demolition of existing buildings may be warranted, as compared to renovation.

The policy establishes a two-step procedure for the project review and approval process. The first step is an evaluation of proposed resort community benefits and analysis of the conceptual design relative to the established design guidelines. If supported at this step, the project then moves to detailed design development, and a consolidated rezoning and development permit approval process. For greater certainty, the policy also identifies potential improvements that are recognized as resort community benefits, as well as specific requirements and criteria for consideration. The policy also establishes some general rules for the amount of additional density (generally limited to no greater than 10% of base density) and consistency with municipal growth management policies concerning accommodation capacity (bed units) and commercial capacity.

Further Commercial Study

Whistler Retail Study (2007)

In June 2005, the RMOW initiated a retail study in order to support local decision-making related to the economic health and viability of Whistler’s retail. The retail study was completed by Thomas Consultants Inc. and involved in-depth qualitative and quantitative analysis of Whistler’s retail conditions, retail trends and benchmarks and competitive influences. Whistler’s retail performance and experience were evaluated through stakeholder interviews and a retail consumer intercept survey; a profile of resort communities to identify resort retail trends and compare performance benchmarks; review of regional competitive influences; a quantification of Whistler’s retail market and projected market demand opportunities; and, an inventory of Whistler’s retail nodes in terms of amount of retail space by category, number of stores, vacancy rates and lease rates; as well as, strengths and weaknesses related to location (exposure, visibility, circulation and access), quality (built form and streetscape), target market focus (selection and price points) and market representation (merchandise mix and diversity).

Key Findings + Recommendations

The following key findings concern retail supply and use, performance and experience, and support recommendations for strategic retail positioning and enhancement, optimal retail mix (amount, location, type and character) as well as specific OCP and Zoning Bylaw amendments.

- » **Establish a Comprehensive Nodal Positioning Strategy.** Retail space has become too dispersed throughout the community, which requires a purposeful strategy to re-concentrate retail into distinct nodes. There is also a lack of non-retail anchoring amenities/functions/activities and limited diversity in the merchandise mix, which has

become redundant through the over representation of specific and similar retail categories. A sufficient mix of retail is needed to sustain local needs and lifestyle preferences and mitigate spending leakages.

- *Recommendation: Facilitate a framework for a nodal positioning strategy to emphasize core concentrations of retail, strengthening merchandise and F&B offerings, amenities, key retail frontages and strategic location of anchors. Create distinct merchandise, dining and character/programmed experiential precincts throughout the Village.*

The municipality is working to implement the nodal positioning strategy within the Village through identification and development of distinct Village “neighbourhoods”.

- » **Restrict Retail Space Additions.** The Whistler community has a considerable amount of retail space. The majority of this retail space is occupied (95%) indicating strong demand for retail; current vacancies are attributable to poor location/quality of space and increasing occupancy costs relative to sales performance. [*The 2010 Non-Residential Space Inventory includes 222,837m² or 2.4 million ft² of developed space; 65% or 143,124 m² of this is commercial space. Of the total commercial space, 46% is located in Whistler Village, 12% in the Upper Village, 10% in Creekside and 16% in Function Junction. Additional approved undeveloped local commercial space is allocated in Cheakamus Crossing/Athlete Centre (1,250 m²)³⁴ Rainbow (2,100m²) as well as service commercial with limited retail in Function Junction as part of the First Nations commercial service station/industrial service zoning (1,250m²).*]
- *Recommendations: No new space additions, except for existing zoned and undeveloped space, and only allowing for reconfiguration of space or relocation of existing stores. This is to support the recommended repositioning of the current retail inventory to strengthen long-term viability. Provide only small, neighbourhood scale retail that serves needs of local neighbourhood residents for any new or future retail nodes.*
- » **Protect the Shopping + Dining Experience.** The character and atmosphere in Whistler is highly valued, and shopping and dining are considered as critical elements to the overall Resort Community Experience. Outdoor patios and restaurants are particularly important to creating streetscape vitality and energy.
 - *Recommendations: Implement new zoning and bylaw policies that allow for zoning of important outdoor patio and restaurant locations, while also zoning other key uses in critical locations. Continue to support encroachments of outdoor patios on municipal property and allow for retail spill out into common areas and off stroll spaces for sidewalk events. Also consider maximum retail and restaurant size guidelines for storefronts at grade that respect the merchandise mix, positioning and compatibility of the use with the envisioned character of each respective node. Restrict any additional liquor primary licensing in Whistler Village. Further, the study recommends retail storefront and streetscape improvements, public areas and maintenance of high quality design standards.*
- » **Retain local expenditures in the resort community.** Whistler currently captures 73% of local trade area expenditures, which is considered to be strong. However, Whistler’s residents and

³⁴ Total maximum permitted gross floor area for commercial uses (including local service commercial, personal service, restaurant and office) within the Residential Live-Work One parcel-specific Zone (Bylaw 1937, 2010 adopted October 5, 2010).

visitors will increasingly have greater access to more affordable goods and services outside the community, increasing the risk of retail leakage³⁵.

- *Recommendation: Evolving competition in Squamish will necessitate that retailers continue to adapt and evolve in order to further attract and retain local expenditure in the community. Companion recommendations include coordination of a tenant recruitment strategy to identify and pursue compatible retail store types locally, regionally and nationally as it is important for Whistler to attract and prioritize local independent tenants while recognizing the role of a strong contingent of branded tenants to create excitement and adequately fill the large amount of retail space in Whistler.*
- » **Improve Retail Sales Performance.** The current cost structure for retailers with respect to rents and sales are at an imbalance. Retail rents have leveled off over the past few years however occupancy (Common Area Maintenance) costs are still high when compared to other mountain resort comparables. Vacancy rate is on the threshold of becoming above average and the absorption time for vacant space is increasing.
 - *Recommendation: Establish a retail liaison position and work with local landlords to develop a strategy for retailers to achieve greater stability and find greater balance between retail sales and base rents (variable rental rates by season for example).*

Highlighted retail study findings and recommendations provide a solid basis for local decision-making regarding retail uses; however, recommendations regarding specific tools, strategies, policies, projects and programs will require further review.

Whistler Village Food + Beverage Usage Strategy (Draft June, 2010)

Food and beverage uses play a critical anchor role in Whistler's Village and provide activity, animation and vitality. The strategy of anchoring public spaces with restaurants and outdoor seating has been engrained in the planning, design and development of Whistler Village through the Whistler Village Master Plan and proposal calls, the OCP development permit guidelines, and development approvals for each property. However, ensuring restaurants and patios continue to perform this anchor role by restricting use by development permit or by covenant is not secure.

Given Whistler's fragmented property ownership structure and market rents favouring retail uses over restaurant uses, a growing risk of losing important food and beverage locations to retail as individual owners seek to maximize their investment has been identified. At issue is the replacement of food and beverage uses from strategic locations in Village squares and plazas. This could have a significant negative impact on resort vibrancy and restaurant supply, in turn impacting resort experience, visitor satisfaction and the long-term economic prosperity of the resort as a whole. The recent Food & Beverage Usage Strategy prepared by Thomas Consultants Inc. further investigates this threat and describes the importance of food and beverage in defining the resort experience.

Key Findings + Recommendations

- » Food and beverage establishments in Whistler Village, the Upper Village and Whistler Creek represent approximately 38% of the overall retail mix (consistent with North American resort average (34%).
- » Approximately 23% of the existing restaurant space is required under Whistler's current Zoning Bylaw under the full-service hotel, lodge and inn accommodations use to meet guest

³⁵ In 2007, retail leakage was estimated at \$40.5 million. Source: 2007 Whistler Retail Study Background Report, Thomas Consultants Inc.

expectations (with the supply of restaurant space directly proportional to the number of guest rooms in the building) with market demand dictating the remaining supply. Existing regulations do not specify preferred restaurant locations to animate the streetscape and contribute to the year-round liveliness and vibrancy of the resort's public spaces.

- » Although the total percentage of food and beverage is important to insuring there is capacity to meet the food service needs of the visitor and resident base, the greatest concern is securing key locations that are critical to the visitor experience and the success of the village. The location of food and beverage uses—and these uses' visibility within Whistler's public plazas and stroll areas—is critical. Square and plazas with restaurants, pubs and grocery stores provide activity, animation and vitality and act as mini-destinations within the heart of Whistler Village, as designated in Whistler's original Master Plan. Their importance and anchor function has been well observed in resort communities; they create, maintain and enhance a resort's distinctive image and are integral to its long-term success.
- » Increasing rental rates that force food and beverage uses from key locations will result in negative resort-wide impacts to the all-important resort experience, such as reduced activity and animation of plazas, squares and the stroll, as well as reduced day-to-night and year-round appeal of key locations within the resort village environment.

The strategy recommends a zoning approach to protect critical food and beverage locations in Whistler's core commercial areas, in essence zoning critical food and beverage locations and their associated patios to reinforce the existing use only. To this end, a zoning amendment has been initiated by the Resort Municipality.

Whistler Retail Design Guide (In Progress; estimated completion early 2011)

As part of the larger retail initiative to support and strengthen Whistler's core retail sector (endorsed by Council in February 2009) staff are updating the existing Whistler Village Retail Streetscape Design Guidelines approved in principle by Council in 2001. This update will produce a how-to guide that establishes a common language and presents ingredients of successful streetscapes, highlights enhancement opportunities and provides illustrated examples reflecting industry trends and best practices to inspire innovative design that improves the overall quality of the retail experience and business patronage and sales. The RMOW Business Enhancement Committee is helping to oversee the retail initiative and provide initial feedback related to this policy initiative. The committee represents stakeholder interests within the retail sector including retail stores, food and beverage, local independents, established businesses and new businesses, property owners, and property managers and leasing representatives. Collaboration among merchants, property owners, community members and the municipality will help to facilitate a shared sense of direction for Whistler's ongoing evolution and enhancement.

Commercial/Light Industrial Supply and Positioning Study (In Progress)

To inform policy development for the OCP update process, in the Fall 2010, the RMOW initiated a commercial and light industrial land use supply and positioning study. The aim of this study is to identify Whistler's future commercial, service commercial and light industrial space needs in the context of the resort community's tourism-based economy and trends. The study will also address the hierarchy and positioning of commercial centres, as well as identify the strategies, policies and land use regulations or other tools necessary to support the economic viability of commercial and light industrial uses that contribute to the greater success and sustainability of the resort community.

RESIDENTIAL

The policy context for residential land use is primarily detailed within the *Quality of Life Backgrounder* including existing OCP housing policies, Whistler 2020 policy content concerning housing (Descriptions of Success), an overview of the WHA³⁶ and its governance and operational policy, as well as a number of recent assessments (Senior's Housing Report 2003, 2009 WHA Needs Assessment, Post-occupancy Evaluation of Resident Housing 2009).

The following section augments this information by highlighting the mechanism by which public funds for housing are levied, as well as the site-specific implications of a number of these recent initiatives including senior's housing and neighbourhood infill.

Employee Housing Service Charge Bylaw

The RMOW enacted its first Employee Housing Service Charge Bylaw (No. 811) in 1990, authorizing the Resort Municipality to impose development charges and establish a designated housing fund for the purpose of building resident housing. This authority was expressly granted under Section 933 (2.1) of the Local Government Act. Since that time, the bylaw was amended several times, and currently exists as Bylaw 1507, 2000. The bylaw requires payment of employee housing charges for commercial, tourist and industrial development to either build resident housing or contribute cash in-lieu to the housing fund as a condition of development approval. The current charge imposes a fee of \$5,908 per employee generated, based on a prescribed formula (e.g. 1 employee per 50 m² of commercial gross floor area, 1 employee per 250 m² of industrial GFA, 0.2 employees per residential guest room subject to a rental pool covenant...). Council later supported a policy to accept cash-in-lieu (set at \$150,000) for the discharge of mandatory suite covenants (2004). This approach was taken to maximize the resident housing opportunity for the employee housing fund in cases where an owner, required to provide a resident suite as part of development approval, did not use the mandatory suite for its intended resident housing.

In 2004, issues were raised concerning the cash-in-lieu charge fee; namely, the existing fee was arguably too low and did not allow for adequate equity generation to build resident units. Council subsequently directed municipal staff to review the bylaw and propose necessary amendments to more accurately reflect employee generation and housing costs, and motivate the construction of employee housing rather than a cash contribution. To date, this has not been resolved and should be considered in the context of future growth management and residential policies that consider Whistler's current housing needs and supply, availability of future residential reserve lands, cost of housing construction and appropriate location.

Seniors Housing Initiative

Providing a wide and diverse range options to house at least 75% of Whistler's workforce in the community has been the primary strategic focus for the WHA, as "Whistler's long term success as a vibrant resort community is contingent upon retaining a stable resident workforce." (*WHA Governance and Operation Policy, October 2007*). In recent years, WHA's mandate to deliver both rental and ownership housing opportunities has begun to expand to embrace the housing requirements not only of Whistler's active workforce, but of retirees and seniors, and those with special housing needs.

³⁶ The WHA is a wholly owned subsidiary of the RMOW. Since its creation in 1997, the WHA has overseen the development of public-sector affordable resident housing in Whistler through the use of the Employee Housing Fund and other public resources. The WHA's mission is to partner with the resort community to sustain a range and supply of housing options for Whistler's active and retired workforce. The WHA performs the combined functions of two other agencies: the Whistler Housing Authority Ltd, a municipal corporation that is legally responsible for resident restricted housing developments, and the Whistler Valley Housing Society (WVHS), a volunteer, non-profit society formed under the Societies Act as a legal entity qualified for acquiring Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) financing.

In 1995, the Mature Action Committee (MAC) was created as a not-for-profit organization to advocate for issues facing the growing population of Whistler seniors. Seniors housing continues to be a growing concern and need in Whistler as the population ages, as well as the ability to “age in place”.

In 2000, MAC hired a planner to investigate potential housing sites in Whistler (a summary of this analysis is provided in the following pages). In 2003, the RMOW created a seniors’ housing task force that came up with 14 recommendations to Council. In 2005, following a memorandum of understanding between WHA and MAC, the president of MAC was appointed to a newly-created seat on the WHA Board to represent the housing concerns of seniors and facilitate the development senior-restricted housing.

In 2009, three proposed sites for seniors’ housing: were identified: Cheakamus Crossing, Rainbow and the Tennis Resort Lands on the periphery of the Village. At Cheakamus, seniors could see a maximum of 24 restricted units; six town homes and 18 apartments. At Rainbow, two sites are proposed to provide 40 additional seniors-restricted units to MAC members. Finally, at the Tennis Resort Lands (Holborn Site just north of Marketplace) there is an opportunity to create as many as 22 units. Although many of these developments are still in their infancy, MAC has made significant progress as an organization and will continue to pave the way for senior’s housing for generations to come.

Infill Housing Initiative

Land use policies in communities of all sizes emphasize various benefits of infill housing: more efficient use of land, infrastructure and services; increased diversity of housing types through the creation of smaller units; and reduced pressure to develop previously unsettled areas which may have important ecological and/or recreation values. In Whistler, infill is proposed as a strategy to mitigate the replacement of market housing currently owned and occupied by members of the community and the local workforce. Though the benefits of infill are acknowledged and relevant in Whistler, experience here and elsewhere identified barriers such as servicing capacity, construction costs, and difficulty adapting existing land use patterns and regulations to accommodate more compact settlement forms.

In September 2005, Council received an information report that summarized the impetus for pursuing infill housing and described the recommendations of a Council-appointed task force. Whistler’s existing and proposed infill opportunities target properties in the RS1 zone, which includes 70% of all residential parcels and covers 60% of the municipality’s residential land area. The task force considered three scenarios for the RS1 zone: 1) lot splits, 2) duplexes, and 3) multiple suites.

In February 2008, Council received an additional information report that built on the 2005 report’s initial parameters for lot size, density and employee restrictions to allow the three scenarios, and the results of the working example to test the parameters. Infrastructure constraints in many neighbourhoods will limit neighbourhood infill opportunities. Only Alpine Meadows and Emerald Estates have received the detailed study required to determine if existing waste and sewer services are adequate for a modest level of infill housing. In Alpine Meadows south of 19 Mile Creek, servicing can accommodate an additional 118 bed units. Alpine Meadows north of 19 Mile Creek, and Emerald Estates, are limited by the capacity of the downstream sewer pumping stations. All other neighbourhoods require more detailed study to determine the capacity of the various infrastructure systems, and what capital upgrades, if any, will be required to accommodate a modest neighbourhood infill program.

Infill Housing – Pilot Project Alpine Meadows South

In February 2008, based on the Infill Housing Initiatives and consultation with the task force, community, and a workshop session, the RMOW initiated applications for an OCP amendment and

rezoning for the Alpine Meadows South area³⁷. The rezoning application from Residential Single One (RS1) to Residential Infill One (RI1) would allow flexibility in use of existing permitted density for limited infill housing opportunities. The maximum floor space ratio (FSR)³⁸ remains at 0.35 and maximum unit sizes remain unchanged. Lots with parcel area greater than 695 m² may have up to two suites or may have a duplex where one unit must be resident restricted with occupancy and price controls. Larger lots with parcel areas between 1,100 and 1,390 m² may be subdivided providing each of two lots must be larger than 400 m², have a minimum usable site area of 325 m² and a frontage of 12 metres, and one lot must be resident restricted with occupancy and price controls.

On August 17, 2010 the bylaws for Infill housing in Alpine Meadows received third reading and were forwarded to the appropriate provincial ministries for approval prior to adoption.

Further Residential Land Use Study

Comparative Evaluation of Potential Housing Sites in Whistler (2004)

In December 2003, Council commissioned, through the WHA, a comparative analysis of all privately held sites within the municipality having a potential for development of new resident restricted housing. The intent was to evaluate all remaining developable lands to determine the most appropriate sites for the WHA to pursue. At the time, the municipality was actively seeking to develop new resident housing to meet the goal of achieving housing within Whistler for 75 percent of all employees working within Whistler, including seasonal and long-term rental needs, resident ownership opportunities and housing for seniors.

The study reviewed over one hundred potential sites, including all private sites and some Crown sites for potential development through the 300 acre Legacy Land Agreement. Three general categories used to classify the sites: Potential Development Sites (vacant, undeveloped sites); Under-Developed Sites (sites developed under existing zoning but considered to be underutilized); and Small Infill Sites and Road Ends (small pieces of land that can potentially accommodate some resident housing units).

A comprehensive set of **Site Evaluation Criteria** was used to evaluate each site addressing ecological, social and economic priorities of sustainable residential development. The categories and select criteria within each were:

1. Site and Potential Development Area Sizes (site area net of undevelopable area – slopes greater than 30%, watercourse, wetland and riparian areas).
2. Suitable Housing Types (housing capacity, type/tenure, form/density)
3. Land Value
4. Competing Land Use Interests (current land use, other potential land uses, existing development rights)
5. Locational Considerations (neighbourhood compatibility, proximity to transit and pedestrian routes, proximity to places of work, proximity to amenities and services, within 10 metres of hydro right of way)
6. Environmental Constraints (topography slope <30%, riparian setbacks and wetlands, highway buffer 20 metres, forest type, forested floodplain, within floodplain, aspect)

³⁷ OCP Amendment Bylaw 1913, 2009; Zoning Amendment Bylaw 1914, 2009.

³⁸ Floor Space Ratio means the figure obtained when the gross floor area of all buildings on a parcel is divided by the parcel area. Gross Floor Area includes the total area of all floors in all buildings on a parcel (includes stairwells, basements and cellars but excludes crawl and void spaces, parking, elevators, equipment areas and garbage and recycling facilities up to 20 m². Source: Whistler Zoning Bylaw 303, 1983.

7. Estimated Off-site Costs for Access and Infrastructure (proximity to existing infrastructure, distance to servicing connections, site specific costs for special items, e.g., intersections, bridges, pump stations, costing unit rates by Webster Engineering)
8. Estimated Number of Potential Dwelling Units and Bed Units (developable area – net constraints and roads and green space, average number of units – based on units sizes by type, average number of bed units)
9. Estimated On-site Infrastructure Costs (site review and site cost estimates)
10. Economic Indicators
11. Feasibility and Timing of Development

Based on the analysis sites were ranked based on their development potential as “Good”, “Moderate”, “Fair”, “Poor” and “Zoned”.

In summary, a total of 61 sites were identified for additional resident housing in Whistler within the three site categories: 33 Potential Development Sites, 15 Under-developed Sites and 13 Small Infill Sites and Road Ends. The estimated housing capacity of the “Potential Development Sites” category totaled 8,477 dwelling units, each at an average size of 750 square feet. If only 20 percent of these were to be realized, this would equate to 1,695 new dwelling units or 5,086 potential bed units. From these numbers it was concluded that there is ample opportunity for housing needs into the foreseeable future within the valley from Function Junction to Emerald Estates. **Note that these figures do not include the development potential of the new Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood.*

GREEN BUILDING

Green Building Policy G–23

In October 2008, Council adopted a Green Building Policy that provides guidance for the design, construction and operation of buildings and their surrounding landscapes within the RMOW. It sets performance goals that are progressively more ambitious over time, for the following building types: Commercial, Institutional, High Rise Residential, Multi-Unit Residential, Low-density Residential and Municipal Buildings.

This policy does not contemplate every initiative that the municipality might pursue to achieve its green building goals. The policy scope is limited to practices implemented at the scale of individual buildings and their sites. This policy also recognizes that while local governments help to shape the built environment through their authority to govern land use and their responsibility for administering the BC Building Code (BCBC), in most cases they are explicitly barred from imposing building standards that differ from those set out in the BCBC.

Recognizing the extent and limitations of its authority, the RMOW will pursue three broad avenues for green buildings in the resort community:

1. Use municipal planning, zoning and development permit authority to create compact, efficient development whenever possible.
2. Continue to support provincial efforts to incorporate proven green building requirements within the BCBC.
3. Work with individual landowners and developers to set higher standards for building performance on a site-specific basis.

Six broad objectives for the design, construction and operation of buildings and their sites in Whistler have been established:

1. **Site/Landscape:** Minimize disturbance to soils, vegetation and hydrology through careful location, design, construction practices and site rehabilitation.
2. **Energy:** Decrease energy requirements and associated greenhouse gas emissions; lower the share of energy supplied by non-renewable sources. Target net zero energy consumption.
3. **Water:** Reduce the total volume of water used for buildings and associated landscaping; lower the share of water needs met through the municipal potable system.
4. **Materials:** Use less new material through efficient design and engineering, and material reuse; increase the application of renewable, recycled and locally-sourced materials.
5. **Waste:** lower the total volume of waste sent to landfills during construction and occupancy; work toward the community's goal of generating no landfill waste.
6. **Indoor Environment:** Minimize chemical emissions from materials used in buildings; provide excellent ventilation and air exchange equipment.

This policy has adopted the LEED (Leadership in Energy in Environmental Design) system for the RMOW's performance goals respecting Commercial, Institutional, Municipal and High-Rise Residential buildings. For low and medium density residential construction, the RMOW developed Whistler Green and the Canadian Home Builder's Association Built Green program. The application procedures and associated green building information requirements are outlined in the policy document are available online at www.whistler.ca.

NEXT STEPS

The Land Use and Development Background report is a compilation of current practices. Through the OCP update process, the RMOW will draw on public input and best practices to round out and draft this portion of the Official Community Plan and more fully reflect the interests of the residents of Whistler.



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4325 Blackcomb Way
Whistler, BC Canada V0N1B4
www.whistler.ca

TEL 604 932 5535
TF 1 866 932 5535
FAX 604 935 8109