

QUALITY OF LIFE BACKGROUND REPORT

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

The Resort Municipality of Whistler | January 2011

THE PREMIER MOUNTAIN RESORT COMMUNITY
MOVING TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Recreation and Leisure	1.0
Resident Housing	2.0
Arts Culture and Heritage	3.0
Education	4.0
Public Safety	5.0
Food Systems and Food Security	6.0
Health and Social Strategy	7.0

1.0 RECREATION AND LEISURE

1.1 Current Context

Whistler residents and visitors freely choose recreation and leisure activities, including: engaging in physical activities, participating in organized sports, visiting parks, open spaces and natural areas, or pursuing less intense, more leisurely pastimes.

The psychological, social, economic and spiritual benefits that are fostered by recreation and leisure are important for people and communities, and play a major role in the overall well-being of Whistler and its residents. Recreation in the natural mountain environment is at the heart of Whistler culture and is a major driver of the local economy.

The community excels at providing and practicing recreation and this strategy builds and maintains recreation and leisure opportunities through the combined efforts of private enterprises, local government, community members and groups.

The Whistler 2020 review committee survey of permanent and seasonal residents regarding satisfaction levels with various recreation and leisure opportunities provided the following highlights:

Permanent Residents¹

- 98% of permanent residents were satisfied (86% very satisfied, 12% somewhat satisfied) with opportunities for recreation in Whistler.
- 99% of residents were satisfied with the maintenance of community parks and trails in 2008, an increase from 90% in 2007.
- 92% were satisfied with the services of RMOW recreation programs and facilities, up from 85% in 2007.

Seasonal Residents²

- 94% of seasonal residents were satisfied (71% very satisfied, 23% somewhat satisfied) with opportunities for recreation in Whistler.
- A high proportion (93%) of seasonal residents were satisfied with the maintenance of community parks and trails.
- 81% of seasonal residents were satisfied with municipal recreation and facility services.

1.2 Existing Parks and Recreation Policies

1.2.1 Existing OCP - 1993

The first phases of planning and development in Whistler were driven mainly by the goal of creating a high quality year-round resort. To assist in achieving this goal, park planning projects were initiated to provide open spaces, parks and trails necessary for a high quality year-round resort.

The OCP policies are intended to maintain a balance between the built and natural environment and between the recreation demands of the resort and the needs of the community, while recognizing that Whistler's unique natural beauty and recreation opportunities continue to attract more visitors to the resort each year. The OCP also aims to integrate historical and cultural elements into the parks system.

¹ Source: www.whistler2020.ca

² Source: www.whistler2020.ca

POLICIES FROM THE EXISTING OCP – Section 4.7 Parks and Recreation

4.7.1 The Municipality will, within its resources, develop and maintain a parks and trail system, bicycle paths and recreation areas and facilities generally shown in Schedule F.

4.7.2 The Municipality will, 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.

4.7.3 The Municipality will 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 developments.

4.7.4 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.

1.2.2 Whistler2020 Policy Statements - 2005

The Whistler 2020 vision and strategy document outlines the following Descriptions of Success, the RMOW's highest level policy, for recreation and leisure opportunities in the municipality by 2020:

1. Residents and visitors of all ages and abilities enjoy activities year-round that encourage healthy living, learning and a sense of community.
2. Recreation and leisure are part of the Whistler lifestyle and all community members are able and encouraged to participate.
3. Visitors are aware of and have access to a variety of recreation and leisure offerings at a range of price points.
4. The resort community is globally recognized as a leader in innovative recreation products and services.
5. Recreational experiences reflect an appropriate balance between adventure, challenge and safety, and exist within the comfortable carrying capacity of the amenity.
6. Quality recreation and leisure activities are delivered with exceptional service.
7. Local and regional stakeholders use a collaborative and comprehensive approach to developing amenities and offerings, and to resolving user conflicts.
8. Recreation and leisure infrastructure and practices minimize the degradation of natural areas and are transitioning toward sustainable use of energy and materials.
9. Recreation and leisure is a core contributor to the Whistler economy
10. The cost of amenities is covered within the resort community's financial means and is equitably shared among stakeholders. (Source: www.whistler2020.ca)

1.2.3 Transportation Cycling Plan - 2006

The Whistler Transportation Cycling Plan is oriented to cycling trips to specific destinations, such as to work, school, parks and commercial centres. Whistler's network of transportation cycling routes is examined, including Highway 99, municipal roadways and the Valley Trail. Other key aspects of transportation cycling covered by the plan are end-of-trip facilities, connections to other transportation modes, and community education and encouragement programs.

The Whistler Cycling Committee and the Resort Municipality of Whistler have previously developed a cycling planning process to help guide the future of both recreational and transportation cycling in

Whistler. The planning process is driven by the community vision, priorities and strategies of Whistler 2020 – Moving Toward a Sustainable Future.

The Whistler Cycling Committee, a multi-stakeholder group representing the RMOW, the Whistler Off Road Cycling Association (WORCA), Whistler Blackcomb, Tourism Whistler, and community members, has developed the plan.

In the preparation of the Transportation Cycling Plan, a Cycling Vision for the community was articulated, imagining how cycling in Whistler could look and feel in the future. The Current Reality of transportation cycling was examined and opportunities to move toward the vision were identified. Finally, actions have been proposed as specific steps to move forward.

The plan is oriented to cycling trips to specific destinations, such as to work, school, parks and commercial centres. The plan, however, is not limited to those commuting between home and work. Transportation cycling facilities will be used by residents, second homeowners and visitors to combine shopping and errands with recreation and fitness activities. By cycling, they will avoid automobile trips while enjoying the Whistler outdoor experience.

The main goals of the Transportation Cycling Plan and the Recreational Cycling Plan are:

- **Goal 1:** Local trails and community plans and programs facilitate cycling by residents.
- **Goal 2:** The resort community promotes and supports cycling.
- **Goal 3:** Whistler maintains its reputation as a premier cycling destination by offering high quality trails and events.
- **Goal 4:** Transportation cycling contributes to the protection of the environment and the liveability of the community.
- **Goal 5:** Local cycling trails highlight Whistler's natural environment without compromising its values.
- **Goal 6:** Cycling contributes to the long-term economic health of the resort.
- **Goal 7:** Residents, businesses and government cooperate to develop the Sea-to-Sky region as the mountain biking capital of Canada.

1.2.4 Whistler Recreational Cycling Plan - 2006

The Recreational Cycling Plan examines cycling trails, cycling tourism and economic development, services provided to cyclists, and the needs of the local cycling community. The recreational plan incorporates a Cycling Trails Master Plan. This long-term plan for cycling trails will ensure that the riding needs of both residents and visitors are met, while protecting the ecological values of Whistler's natural environment.

Whistler has more than 300 km of public off-road cycling trails, comprising: 35 km of paved Valley Trail linking commercial centres, parks and neighbourhoods; 160 km of single-track, ranging from easy to expert; and 120 km of double-track, some smooth and flat, some steep and demanding.

The Recreational Cycling Plan provides a vision of what Whistler's cycling trails network could look like by the year 2020, and will guide annual trail development activities.

The Whistler Cycling Committee and the Resort Municipality of Whistler have previously developed a cycling planning process to help guide the future of both recreational and transportation cycling in Whistler. The planning process is driven by the community vision, priorities and strategies of Whistler 2020 – Moving Toward a Sustainable Future.

The intent of this plan is to provide a community-wide vision of recreational cycling and an action plan to move toward that vision. The plan will guide the RMOW capital and operating expenditures on cycling infrastructure, events and programs. It will also inform the planning of other stakeholders, including WORCA, Tourism Whistler, Whistler Blackcomb, Whistler Chamber of Commerce, individual businesses and community organizations.

1.2.5 Whistler Trail Standards - 2005

In 2005, the RMOW developed and adopted the Whistler Trail Standards: Environmental and Technical Trail Features. The document is primarily focused on mountain bike trail planning, construction and maintenance. The standards identify trail types, trail difficulty ratings, as well as trail and technical terrain feature (TTF) construction specifications.

The Resort Municipality of Whistler's Trail Standards, Environmental and Technical Trail Features were drafted in support of two initiatives identified by Volume One of Whistler 2002: Charting a Course for the Future. The first and foremost initiative described under the priority of Moving Toward Environmental Sustainability, states *"We've established a trail hierarchy and environmental standards to ensure the type of trail and its maintenance is appropriate to the setting."* A land use compatibility matrix was developed to address this objective.

The matrix outlines the Trail Type and Trail Difficulty Level acceptable in distinct land-use classes. As well, environmental guidelines were established to minimize the placement of trails in sensitive environments.

The second initiative described under the priority of Enhancing the Whistler Experience states *"Whistler is one of the top bike towns in North America, with world-class trails..."* Whistler's trails must continue to provide exciting experiences for all levels of riders from families to advanced riders. Attention to providing a challenging experience, maintenance, a seamless network and an easy-to-use trail system will help position Whistler as one of the top bike towns in North America.

Appropriate management of our on-road and off-road trail network is intended to elevate Whistler's status as a cycling destination with minimal environmental impact.

1.2.6 Sea to Sky Trail Master Plan - 2005

In pursuit of a vision of a family oriented recreation trail linking the communities in the Sea to Sky Trail corridor, the Sea to Sky Trail Steering Committee retained Cascade Environmental Resource Group Ltd. to prepare a trail Master Plan for the proposed Sea to Sky Trail. The Steering Committee includes representatives from the Squamish Lillooet Regional District (SLRD), the Village of Pemberton, the Resort Municipality of Whistler and the District of Squamish. This document was prepared as part of the master planning exercise and is presented in three sections. The first section covers the overall vision of the trail, its feel and style. It also examines the economic, social and health benefits this recreation feature would bring to the area, complete with an overview of similar successful multi-use trails. The second section examines the various methods available to tenure land over which the trail flows with ideas for successfully marketing the Sea to Sky Trail. The third section contains a technical evaluation of the various potential routes of the trail. The entire Sea to Sky Trail is divided into 17 Character Areas and each is examined and summarized based on preferred and alternate routes, section highlights, length, elevation gain/loss, physical and environmental obstacles as well as underlying land ownership and related concerns such as highway and railway crossings. Each section of the trail is also portrayed on an annotated map at either 1:25,000 or 1:30,000 scale.

The Sea to Sky Trail is intended to be a corridor-wide sustainability initiative. The Sea to Sky Trail will be constructed and operated in a manner that meets the needs of residents and guests of the corridor without reducing or compromising the capacity of the environment which it occupies to provide for future generations. As such it will incorporate the principles of sustainability. Whistler2020, an initiative of the RMOW and other resort community partners identifies four sustainability objectives that can provide guidance for the Sea to Sky Trail's planning and development.

1.2.7 Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges - 2007

This policy applies to the delivery of recreation services in the areas of registered programs, general admission and facility rentals. This policy is designed to encourage innovative delivery of services and maximize revenue potential, while marketing and promotion initiatives will be undertaken from time to time that may reduce rates.

Fees and charges are established, structured and administered to ensure that:

- The recreation department is operating within its financial means.
- Fees and charges are equitable and consistent.
- The cost of programs and services is not a barrier to recreation participation.

The following are samples of existing fees, charges and programs operated by the department:

- i. Recreation Assistance Program - Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges - as recreation services are considered essential to a healthy community, and the municipality recognizes residents' ability to pay varies, the department will continue to maintain the municipal recreation assistance program.
- ii. Resident Affordability - to encourage participation in recreational activities, the RMOW will continue its significant investment in affordable recreation initiatives.
- iii. Fees may reflect a difference between a resident and a visitor when appropriate.
- iv. Fees and charges will be applied to all recreation programs and facilities.
- v. Waived and Reduced Fees - fees and charges may be reduced or waived, by the General Manager of Community Life, Manager of Program Services, or the Manager of Recreation Facilities (hereby referred to as the Management Team) if significant social or substantial financial benefit to the community or resort is derived.
- vi. User Classifications - the various age groups have been established to provide guidance in the establishment of rate structures. Adult: 19 years of age or older, Youth: 13 through 18 years, Children: 4 through 12 years, Infant: under 4 years is free, Family: an adult, spouse and all their dependents under 19 years of age (including foster children).
- vii. Competitive Analysis - a market analysis of other resort communities and of public and private services in the Lower Mainland will be undertaken approximately every 5 years to ensure fees and charges remain competitive. As part of this analysis, members of the Resident Affordability, Economic, Recreation & Leisure and Finance Whistler2020 Task Forces will review draft recommendations for adjustments to fees and charges.

1.2.8 Recreation Assistance Program - 1998

The assistance program provides a service credit to Whistler residents in financial need as determined by a recognized outside agency.

The assistance program is designed to allow Whistler residents, who are financially disadvantaged, a credit which is applied to the cost of programs and admission services.

The eligibility of individuals into the program requires an outside agency such as the Ministry of Social Services to identify those clients in need, and validate their applications.

This program applies only to Resort Municipality of Whistler Recreation Facilities and Programs. As part of this policy it is a requirement that Municipal staff bring the policy forward for Council review.

1.2.9 Recreation Master Plan for Whistler's Park System - 1996

The Resort Municipality of Whistler contracted Professional Environmental Recreational Consultants LTD (PERC) to undertake a study to develop a Recreation Master plan. Because the municipality changed and developed dramatically since 1980, the needs of the resort community have become much more complex. Municipal Council also recognized that there has been a significant change in community priorities, with an emphasis on slowing growth, developing additional community facilities and preserving the natural environment. The change compelled the RMOW Parks and Recreation Department to produce a new plan in 1996.

The ultimate aim of the plan is to achieve a balance between the built and natural environment, the demands of the resort and the needs of the community. The plan is a document that will provide direction for municipal council to ensure that Whistler's natural and recreational resources are preserved and that parkland is set aside for future use as Whistler continues to grow. The Recreation Master plan will assist Municipal Council with the planning process when confronted with development and rezoning applications.

The Recreation Master Plan contains more detailed programs, objectives, guidelines and standards for municipal parks and trails.

The 1996 Recreation Master Plan contains the following policies:

1. The municipality shall establish a park acquisition fund to purchase properties on a priority basis.
2. The municipality shall continue to apply for Crown lands that should be set aside as park or open space.
3. The municipality shall consider acquisition of parkland through the exchange of development rights where appropriate.
4. The Recreation Master plan shall be integrated with the Official Community Plan to ensure that park priorities are coordinated with the overall direction of the resort community.
5. Parks and Recreation Department shall continue to prepare and maintain as-built master plans for all parks. The intent of each park and how it fits into the overall Master plan should be clearly defined to Council.
6. The Parks and Recreation Department in conjunction with the Planning Department shall coordinate efforts leading to the implementation of the Heritage Plan.
7. The Parks and Recreation Department shall preserve heritage sites currently under the municipal jurisdiction in their original state wherever possible.
8. The Parks and Recreation Department shall integrate public art into the design of parks and public facilities where appropriate.
9. Biophysical and geological studies as they relate to Whistler's natural history shall be coordinated with Garibaldi Provincial Park representatives.
10. Whistler's park system shall be planned focusing on significant water features of the Whistler Valley such as water view corridors unique vegetation etc.
11. The Parks and Recreation Department shall coordinate planning efforts with other municipal departments to minimize the impacts on parks from adjacent land uses through the use of landscaped buffers, the development of appropriate facilities and the sensitive design of roads, parking lots and activities that require lighting or generate high noise levels.

12. The planning and design of neighbourhood parks shall reflect the needs of residents in that particular area. Parking shall be minimized to discourage traffic and encourage walking and cycling to these neighbourhood parks and neighbourhood watch programs shall be encouraged for security of parks where appropriate. Further, resident participation will be encouraged in the construction of their neighbourhood parks.
13. The trail system will continue to be expanded to link parks, open spaces, the Village, lakes, other trails and public attractions.
14. The alpine trail network will be expanded and efforts for expansion will be coordinated with development and maintenance procedures with private and government agencies.
15. The Recreation Master plan shall limit the development of natural areas to passive low impact activities.
16. Design improvements of natural areas shall consider environmental impacts where necessary.
17. The Parks and Recreation Department shall adhere to the Environmental Impact Assessment procedures as outlines in the Official Community Plan.
18. The Parks and Recreation Department shall adopt environmental monitoring programs so that impacts can be assessed.
19. Areas of special scenic importance shall be protected. Visual impact assessments shall be conducted where required.
20. The RMOW considers environmental protection of all natural watercourses, water bodies, and wetlands to be of paramount importance, but will encourage outdoor recreation uses of these areas, where such use can be shown to be compatible with preservation and enhancement objectives on a site-by-site basis.

LEISURE AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMING

1. The Parks and Recreation Department shall increase and encourage year round recreational and cultural opportunities for youth.
2. The Parks and Recreation Department shall provide programs to encourage greater use and participation of facilities.
3. Recreational participation rates and activity preferences of both community and visitor users shall be analysed periodically.
4. The Parks and Recreation Department shall cooperate with the private sector in providing services and facilities where appropriate.

1.3 For more Background

1. Existing OCP – 1993 – Section 1.2.1
2. Existing Whistler2020 Policy Statement - 2005 – Section 1.2.2
3. Transportation Cycling Plan – 2006 – 1.2.3
4. Whistler Recreational Cycling Plan – 2006 – 1.2.4
5. Whistler Trail Standards - 2005 – Section 1.2.5
6. Sea to Sky Trail Master Plan – 2006 – Section 1.2.6
7. Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges – 2007 – Section 1.2.7
8. Recreation Assistance Program – 1998 – Section 1.2.8
9. Recreation Master Plan for Whistler’s Park System 1996 – Section 1.2.9

2.0 RESIDENT HOUSING

2.1 Current Context

According to Whistler2020 monitoring:

Permanent Residents

- In 2008, 34% of permanent residents paid more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs.
- Overall, 88% of permanent residents were satisfied with the livability of their housing in 2008 with 61% 'very satisfied' and 27% 'somewhat satisfied'.

Seasonal Residents

- In 2008, 70% of seasonal residents paid more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs.
- Overall, 67% of seasonal residents were satisfied with the livability of their housing with 28% 'very satisfied' and 39% 'somewhat satisfied.'

Housing a large majority of the workforce in Whistler is absolutely essential to maintaining a vibrant and socially sustainable community. Ensuring that locals have the opportunity to live locally enriches the social fabric of the community; contributes substantially to the ongoing prosperity of the local economy; and reduces the negative impacts associated with extended commuting patterns. To achieve these ends, community members need homes and neighbourhoods that meet their needs, are accessible, and are affordable. In acknowledgement of this priority, Whistler has committed to ensuring that 75% of local employees live within the municipality.

2009 will be remembered as a milestone year for resident restricted housing in Whistler. With the unequivocal success of the development and presale program at Cheakamus Crossing whereby 97% of the 221 new resident restricted ownership units have been sold; the WHA's new 55 unit Chiyakmesh rental apartment building now complete in the core of the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood; and families moving into their recently constructed homes in the new Rainbow neighbourhood, there is a swell of excitement and optimism for many locals who have secured their own housing in Whistler.

With the completion of another 36 resident restricted units at Fitzsimmons Walk near the end of 2009, Whistler will be reaping the community benefit of 462 new resident restricted ownership and rental units that will be occupied in 2009-2010.

Once Whistler's newest resident restricted neighbourhoods at Cheakamus Crossing, Rainbow and Fitzsimmons Walk are occupied, Whistler's inventory of resident restricted housing will total over 6,100 restricted beds (1946 units).

2.2 Existing Resident Housing Policies

2.2.1 Existing OCP - 1993

The Municipality regards it as desirable that the community provides a range of housing types and prices so that residents can find affordable, suitable housing. The Municipality, however, favours

approaches that involve minimal intervention and restriction. Delivering affordable housing will enable those who work in Whistler to live in Whistler.

The following are the housing policy statements in the existing OCP document:

1. The Municipality will monitor the growth rates of commercial development, commercial accommodation and skier capacity in conjunction with the availability of affordable resident housing.
2. When there is a demonstrated need, the Municipality will encourage the construction of affordable housing to accommodate permanent residents and employees. Criteria for the development of resident housing are set out in Section 4.13.7.
3. The Municipality will 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.
4. The Municipality will monitor the housing requirements of the community and 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.
5. The Municipality will continue to support and encourage auxiliary residential accommodation as a source of resident accommodation.
6. The Municipality will support medium density housing in the Callaghan Valley or on the South Cheakamus Bench that is designed to accommodate the needs of Whistler residents. It is understood that the development of resident housing shall only occur as supported by the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan. Further, such development shall be guided by a detailed planning review, including the preparation of development permit guidelines by the Municipality.

2.2.2 Whistler Housing Authority Overview - 1997

The Whistler Housing Authority (WHA) was created in October 1997 to oversee the creation, administration and management of resident restricted housing in Whistler. Essentially an umbrella organization, the WHA coordinates the efforts of the W. V. Housing Corporation and the Whistler Valley Housing Society to fulfill this mandate. Each of these entities brings a distinct advantage to the WHA.

The W. V. Housing Corporation (WVHC), founded in 1990, is a wholly owned subsidiary of the RMOW, the company's sole shareholder. As a corporation, the WVHC carries the authority to enter into the legally-binding agreements essential to the development of housing, including turn-key construction, property management, and mortgage financing contracts.

The Whistler Valley Housing Society (WVHS) is a volunteer, non-profit organization which was formed in 1983 under the Societies Act of British Columbia. As such, the WVHS is eligible for government funding and assistance programs reserved exclusively for non-profit societies, the most significant of which is the favourable equity requirement for capital borrowing afforded by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

The WHA is governed by a Board of Directors, which is in turn appointed by, and accountable to, Whistler Council. During its development phase, the Whistler Housing Authority received the majority of its funding from the Employee Works and Services Reserve, popularly referred to as the Housing Fund.

The Housing Fund was created in 1990, when Council enacted the Employee Service Charge Bylaw in an effort to encourage Whistler employers to provide their staff with suitable housing. Under the new

law, developers of commercial properties were required to either build housing for their future employees, or contribute to a fund that would be used by the Municipality to do so on their behalf. Between 1997 and 2002, the roughly \$6.5 million Housing Fund was levered by the WHA to create 144 units (330 employee beds) of high quality resident restricted rental housing clustered in four projects located throughout the community.

The rental revenue generated by these WHA-built housing projects covers the operating expenses, mortgage payments, administrative costs and replacement reserves associated with each, thereby ensuring their long-term financial viability.

When the long term, fixed rate mortgages that financed these projects are paid off in 20 to 25 years, the community will have an enduring legacy of assets: the land and buildings (at a current value of about 30 million dollars), plus significant cash flow from net rental income to address the housing needs of the future.

WHA achieve their mission by:

- Providing professional and accountable administration under the direction of the Board of Directors.
- Being fiscally responsible.
- Respecting stated environmental and community values within the context of current RMOW plans.
- Protecting current and future restricted housing inventory.
- Cooperating with municipal, community and regional partners.
- Researching employee/employer needs.

2.2.3 Seniors Housing Policy Report - 2003

Whistler has generally been viewed as a youthful community, with a bulge in the 20-35 year age group. Figures from the 2001 Census show that the age characteristics of the community are changing. The fastest growing age group between 1996 and 2001 was the 75-79 yr olds, followed by the 55-59 and 65-69 age groups. While seniors still form a small share of the overall population, these figures show a trend toward a maturing population.

In 2003, there were 480 households over age 55 living in Whistler in 2001. Based on current demographics, and if existing residents remain in Whistler, there will be an additional 600 households age 55 and over in 2011.

According to the report, there was no seniors' housing designed or intended specifically for seniors in Whistler, but seniors do occupy some resident restricted units. WHA units may or may not be appropriate for seniors, because they were not designed with aging in place considerations in mind, the mix of residents might not be appropriate, and the locations may not be suitable, although there appears to be no concerns at present. WHA has used the Employee Housing Reserve Fund to make capital contributions to make employee housing more affordable, but these funds are dwindling and will have limited impact on the creation of non-market housing.

This report distinguishes between at least two potential sub-groups of seniors and seniors housing. The first group is current Whistler residents who live in their own home, have likely accrued substantial equity in their home over the years, wish to continue living in Whistler and are looking for a unit which meets their requirements as they age. Market housing or resident housing would likely be appropriate for this group.

The second group consists of those residents who have been renting accommodation or living in resident restricted WHA housing units, but who are reaching the point where they require housing which is accessible, perhaps smaller, and well-situated from the point of view of services, amenities and transportation. Affordability would be of paramount concern for this group, and thus non-market or resident restricted housing would be most likely to meet their needs. At the moment this is not a large group, but will likely increase in the future given the present demographics of the municipality.

In both cases, self-contained housing is recommended over supportive housing as a first step, since the latter appeals to the older senior market.

The following are proposed policy from the report:

- Council encourage the development of occupancy restricted market seniors housing for seniors currently living in Whistler and facilitate the development of resident restricted/price and resale restricted seniors housing.
- Council instruct staff to conduct research on issues relating to affordability for seniors living on retirement incomes in Whistler to clarify needs.
- Council adopt 55 plus as the minimum the age for seniors for housing planning purposes, recognizing that specific projects may adopt different age requirements as demographics change.
- Support relaxations to zoning requirements, where appropriate, to improve affordability of resident restricted seniors units, but do not change bed unit allocations at this time.
- Require occupancy covenants and price and resale restrictions for non-market seniors housing.
- Develop/adopt siting criteria and adaptable design guidelines for seniors and disabled housing and promote adaptable design.
- That the WHA Board supports the Seniors Housing Task Force recommendations in principle, however, as the Employee Housing Fund monies have been directed towards housing for Whistler's retired and active workforce, the WHA should not take the lead role and use WHA financial resources in the delivery of seniors only housing.

2.2.4 Comparative Evaluation Potential Resident Housing Sites Whistler - 2004

In December of 2003, RMOW Council commissioned, through the Whistler Housing Authority (WHA), a comparative analysis of privately held sites having a potential for development of new resident restricted housing in Whistler. The intent was to evaluate all remaining available lands to determine the most appropriate sites for the WHA to pursue. Although the primary purpose was to assess privately held lands, a few pieces of Crown lands that were deemed too small for the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan purposes have been included in this study. The study findings will assist the WHA, RMOW staff and Council in their review of the feasibility for developing those sites.

The objective of the report was to identify and assess potential development sites for resident housing to accommodate seasonal and long-term rental needs, resident ownership opportunities and housing for seniors. Criteria were established to evaluate the potential resident housing sites, addressing the ecological, social and economic priorities of sustainable residential development. The evaluation took into consideration Whistler's planning goals and policies as enumerated in various documents such as Whistler 2002: Charting a Course for the Future (Vision), the Official Community Plan (OCP), and the CSP process.

The report found that a total of 61 potential sites were identified for additional resident housing in Whistler. The estimated housing capacity of the "Potential Development Sites" totals 8,477 units,

each at an average size of 750 square feet (70 square metres). These numbers do not include the potential for new residential units on the Under-Developed Sites or on the Small Infill Sites & Road Ends.

2.2.5 Infill Housing Strategy - 2004

Community consultation played a large role in the creation of this infill housing strategy. Since 2004 various forms of community engagement and consultation helped to create the foundation for this infill housing strategy. Initially, a community based Non-Cost Housing Task Force worked with staff to develop recommendations for project goals, zoning parameters, design guidelines, and price and occupancy restrictions. Approximately 100 members of the public then participated in two open houses to consider these initial recommendations and review hypothetical infill housing working examples.

The Alpine South neighbourhood is the site of an infill housing pilot project. Infill housing is the insertion of additional housing units into an already approved subdivision or neighbourhood. This type of housing refers to everything from additional units built on the same lot, adding multiple units to an existing home, to lot subdivisions. In Whistler, initiatives such as infill housing are one of many that help the community continue to reach the Whistler2020 goal of housing 75% of our workforce locally.

The RMOW infill housing strategy for Alpine South includes three options for homeowners. These scenarios include a Lot Split in which an owner can sell off a minimum 400 square metres parcel of their property. This newly created lot would need to be registered as employee housing.

A homeowner can also choose to build a stratified duplex in which one of the units is earmarked as employee housing. The third option includes multiple suites in which a homeowner is permitted to build two auxiliary suites on their property if one is within the principle dwelling.

Of course any of these options must be designed to fit within existing neighbourhood land use patterns and architectural characteristics. The benefits of an Alpine infill housing project are many - housing can increase the diversity and availability of resident restricted housing, and allow owners of market real estate to realize some of the value of their property without selling and leaving the community.

How will the purchasing and selling of lot splits or duplex units work with the employee housing restriction? The original sale of the newly created duplex or lot split would not be price-restricted. Instead, the price would be negotiated between the seller and purchaser. The units would however be offered for sale with priority to Whistler Housing Authority waitlist applicants. Once the first sale is complete, that price becomes the base price. Resale price appreciation would be tied to the Core Consumer Price Index as per the current WHA policy for restricted housing.

Proposed policy from the strategy study:

- Allow variances to subdivide large lots >1,390 m² (15,000 sq.ft) subject to Development Permit guidelines and resolution of form/character issues.
- Permit building stratifications of previously occupied existing structures that meet BCBC & are covenanted for employee use.
- Support multiple suite concept for one suite in principal dwelling with a second suite in a detached aux. dwelling (where lot can accommodate multiple suites under max FSR).

2.2.6 Whistler2020 Policy Statements - 2005

The Whistler 2020 vision and strategy document outlines the following goals for housing opportunities in the municipality by 2020.

1. Resident restricted housing is affordable for permanent and short-term residents, through innovative and effective policy and financial models.
2. Effective financial and legal tools 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: 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 liveable, and housing design, construction and operations are evolving toward sustainable and efficient energy and materials management.
8. Developed areas are designed and managed to be sensitive to the surrounding environment.

Source: www.whistler2020.ca

2.2.7 Whistler Housing Authority 2010 Needs Assessment - 2010

This report documents the 2010 Employer Housing Needs Assessment conducted on behalf of the Whistler Housing Authority (WHA). The study uses information collected from a comprehensive survey of Whistler businesses to assess the employment characteristics and housing needs of Whistler's workforce. 2010 is the thirteenth year this research has been conducted.

The survey was conducted by InterVISTAS Consulting on behalf of the WHA and targeted approximately 480 businesses registered with the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW). A total of 195 surveys were returned by businesses, which employed approximately 79 per cent of Whistler's workforce in the 2009/10 winter season.

Whistler continues to exceed its Whistler2020 target of housing 75% of its workforce within municipal boundaries, which adds to the vitality and vibrancy of the resort community. In 2009/10, approximately 9,300 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees (or 76% of the workforce) lived in Whistler. A total of 81% of the seasonal workforce lived in Whistler in the 2009/10 winter season. This is a slight decrease from 2009/10, when 77% of the workforce lived in Whistler. Remaining residences were held by workers outside Whistler, primarily in Pemberton and Squamish.

According to the survey, however, Whistler's workforce is projected to remain steady at 12,200 FTE employees in 2010/11. Only seven per cent of Whistler's employers indicated that they were unable to meet their staffing requirements during the 2009/10 season, because of a shortage of affordable housing and the high cost of living in Whistler.

Currently, 18% of local businesses provide housing for their employees with a total of 2,400 beds, and 57% of employees pay less than \$500/month for staff accommodation.

Affordable housing for local residents has been a legacy of the 2010 Winter Games: The Whistler Olympic and Paralympic Athletes Village became a new Whistler neighbourhood known as Cheakamus Crossing following the Games. The complex includes townhomes/ duplexes (152), condominiums (67), WHA rental apartments (55), an athlete training centre with accommodation, hostel beds (188), and 20 market townhomes.

2.2.8 Post Occupancy Evaluation Resident Restricted Housing Whistler – 2009

In August 2009, a survey was conducted of Whistler residents who are currently living in units purchased through the WHA. The survey was designed in two parts using surveymonkey.com, a website specializing in software for the purpose of conducting online surveys. Residents who have purchased homes through the WHA were sent an email containing links to both sections of the survey and were asked to fill them out. The survey was sent to 128 new residents and, in total, 50 surveys were completed for part 1 and 51 were completed for part two. Several surveys needed to be discarded due to the fact that only one of the two parts was completed or because they were missing vital pieces of information (i.e. address).

The total number of completed, usable surveys is 47: 16 from the Nita Lake; 9 from The Lofts; 7 from Bear Ridge; 6 from 19 Mile Creek; 2 each from Gondola Six, Glacier Ridge, Millar's Ridge and the Spruce Grove Townhomes; and 1 from Lakecrest. Of these, 16 were completed by residents of families with young children (for this study, children are considered young if they are 12 years of age or younger). The small number of responses makes evaluation of residents' satisfaction difficult, especially for developments where only 1 or 2 residents completed the survey. However, the residents' responses, along with additional comments have provided occupants' perspectives on living in various resident housing developments and suggestions for future development.

After reviewing the results of the survey, several trends have emerged and a few issues were repeated by the respondents. Parking and sound insulation were two issues that numerous respondents highlighted. Specifically, the amount and location of available parking (visitor parking in particular) and the sound insulation between units in at least some of the developments were issues of concern for residents. For the parking issue, the WHA may wish to consider further consultation with residents to determine the best options for the design of parking areas for future developments (i.e. underground parking, garages, etc.).

The family perspective also appears to have had an effect on the results for several questions. Specifically, results for families with young children differed from the overall results for the questions regarding the internal layout of units, parking, external areas of units and the amount of common vs. private space in developments. The needs of residents with and without children tend to be quite different and this should be considered when planning future resident housing developments.

Finally, several respondents raised concerns regarding the resale price cap and its effect on residents' willingness to invest in upgrades (such as energy efficient appliances) for their homes. Energy efficient upgrades appear to be a popular option for residents; however, many claim to be unwilling to invest in their homes if those investments will not be reflected in the resale price for their homes.

The purpose of this study was to capture first-hand perspectives from owners living in resident restricted housing. Through these occupants' perspectives the WHA sought to identify aspects of the housing developments that worked well or those that could be improved upon in the future for new

resident housing developments. The survey results highlight several themes that should be considered when planning and designing future resident housing projects.

2.3 For More Background

1. Official Community Plan - 1993 - Section 2.2.1
2. WHA Overview - Section 2.2.2
3. Seniors Housing Policy Report - Section 2.2.3
4. Comparative Evaluation of Potential Resident Housing Sites in Whistler - Section 2.2.4
5. Infill Housing Strategy Report - Section 2.2.5
6. Whistler 2020 Policy Statements - 2005 - Section 2.2.6
7. Whistler Housing Authority 2010 Needs Assessment - Section 2.2.7
8. Post Occupancy evaluation of resident Restrict Housing Whistler - 2009 - Section 2.2.8

3.0 ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

3.1 Current Context

Whistler's culture and heritage have been shaped by its natural mountain environment and outdoor recreation as well as by its people. As a 2009 Cultural Capital of Canada, arts and culture play a large role in improving Whistler resident's quality of life while improving economic development.

There is also growing recognition of the value of local heritage and a vibrant arts community, and many organizations and businesses provide support for artists, performers and local heritage initiatives. Integrating First Nations art and culture in helping to strengthen Whistler's relationships with neighbouring communities and provides opportunities for Whistler's residents and visitors to learn about this rich heritage. The arts, culture and heritage offerings in Whistler also provide amenities to visitors, enhancing and complementing our traditional recreational offerings.

In 1982, the community established the Whistler Community Arts Council, with the mandate of coordinating, stimulating and promoting the growth of performing, literary and visual arts in the Whistler area. Ongoing music, dance, theatre, festival and other events for residents of all ages have resulted. The Whistler Museum and Archives was established in 1986 to document, preserve, and display and celebrate the human and natural history of this unique resort community. Since the time, many other organizations, events and venues continue to emerge to strengthen arts, culture and heritage in Whistler, such as Millennium Place and the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre.

According to Whistler2020 monitoring:

Permanent Residents

- In 2008, 81% of residents were satisfied with the selection of ACH offerings.

Seasonal Residents

- In 2008 showed that 69% of seasonal residents were satisfied with the selection of ACH offerings.

Second Homeowners

- Results show a steady increase over the past 2 years with 71% of second homeowners now satisfied with the selection of ACH offerings.

3.2 Existing Arts, Culture and Heritage Policies

3.2.1. Existing OCP – 1993

The following are policy statements in the existing OCP regarding Art, Culture and Heritage (ACH) issues:

4.5.1 The Municipality will monitor community facility requirements and identify land requirements and will preserve sites to accommodate required community and cultural facilities.

4.5.2 The Municipality will monitor community requirements and plan lands which the Municipality owns to maximize efficiency and to respond to community and cultural priorities.

4.5.3 Cultural facilities should be located primarily in the Whistler Village, Blackcomb and Whistler Creek areas, and in conjunction with other community facilities.

4.5.4 The Municipality will promote and support the construction of a library in Whistler Village.

3.2.2 Cultural Facilities Feasibility Study - 1997

Prepared by the Whistler Centre for Business and the Arts, and funded by the RMOW and BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs, this report examined the feasibility of building a multi-purpose cultural facility to accommodate the performing and visual arts, with emphasis on the theatre.

Included amongst its recommendations was that, prior to proceeding with further facility planning, the RMOW:

- Develop a comprehensive cultural plan,
- Establish appropriate process to establish a common vision for the future of Arts, Culture, Heritage (ACH) in Whistler, including ACH policies within its Official Community Plan to support this Comprehensive Cultural Plan.

3.2.3 Whistler Arts Plan - 2001

Undertaken by the RMOW in 1999, this study engaged the services of Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd. (PERC) and Legacy Heritage Consultants, to develop a framework for art related activities over the next 10 years. Included in this report were:

Organizations and Activities

There are 10 key organizations in Whistler with a primary focus on ACH, plus at least nine volunteer organizations that are critical to growth of ACH at the grassroots level. While the focus of the resort's three major partners is not primarily ACH, they contribute significantly to growth of the cultural sector.

Human Resources

For organizations with a primary focus on ACH, there are an estimated 40 full-time equivalent positions, including up to 60 seasonal staff positions during event production. Roughly 635 volunteers participate in the full range of activities, which engage close to 789 local and visiting artists or groups. In looking towards the future, a need has been expressed for training opportunities and "succession planning" for staff and volunteers, as well as professional development for artists.

Event Profile

The combined activities of 14 non-profit and resort partners provide over 270 days of ACH activities, largely focused on six months.

3.2.4. Whistler2020 Policy Statements - 2005

Whistler 2020 – Whistler is renowned for world-class arts, cultural and heritage opportunities that have become a part of Whistler's spirit and community life. They are creative authentic and diverse, sustainable, accessible and affordable to both residents and visitors.

For the past 10 years, Whistler has engaged intensively in developing its cultural tourism experiences and marketing Whistler to cultural travelers. Whistler's reputation as a cultural tourism destination – a place based cultural tourism destination – has grown in Whistler's domestic, U.S. and international markets. Cultural tourism has generated increased visitor volumes and revenues, especially from May to October, when room night occupancy and yield have increased substantially.

Whistler features world-class cuisine; multiple performing, visual, literary and media arts experiences; a diverse and authentic First Nations product; and an abundance of quality spas and wellness

experiences that embody the passion of Whistlerites for health and well-being. In addition, Whistler features the most developed opportunity available in the global tourism marketplace.

Within the Village, retailers have increased their inventory of local and regionally manufactured artisanal products, which, in turn, has spurred significant growth in the local artisan economy. To meet the demand of travelers for a culturally authentic experience, the municipality, Whistler Blackcomb, hoteliers, restaurants and other partners are showcasing local and regional artists and artisans and enhancing the visibility of artifacts, images, and stories that celebrate Whistler's heritage.

For Whistler residents, the impacts of cultural tourism – both social and economic – have heightened civic identity and pride through the community's intensive engagement with heritage, arts, and culture. The municipality and its partners are dedicated to growing cultural tourism, and to investing in product development. For its part, the Province of BC views Whistler's place-based initiative as a model for cultural tourism that warrants provincial investment, and a best practice to be emulated by other BC communities.

Whistler2020 outlines the following goals for ACH opportunities in Whistler by 2020:

1. The community is passionate about arts, culture and heritage, which have become a part of Whistler's spirit and community life, and is alive with creative energy and aesthetic appreciation.
2. A range of authentic and creative arts, cultural and heritage opportunities attract visitors and contribute to the experience and local economy.
3. Arts, cultural and heritage opportunities attract visitors and contribute to the experience and local economy.
4. Whistler's people and history, natural environment and First Nations culture are retained, celebrated and reflected through authentic and diverse offerings.
5. Local and regional heritage, culture and community spirit are shared locally and beyond Whistler.
6. Arts, culture and heritage, and their local creators and contributors are appreciated and supported as cornerstones of the resort community's health, vitality and economic prosperity.
7. Whistler is renowned for world-class arts, cultural and heritage opportunities and has become a magnet for international artists who come here to perform, create, teach and be inspired.
8. There is a physical and organizational focal point for the diversity of arts, culture and heritage activities that spread throughout the community.
9. Ecologically harmful substances and practices are replaced with more sustainable options.

Source: www.whistler2020.ca

3.2.5 The Whistler Cultural Landscape - 2006

The "Whistler Cultural Landscape" is an inventory of the arts, culture and heritage (ACH) programs delivered during 2005/06 in Whistler by non-profit groups and resort partners to serve as the basis for future planning towards submission of an application for Heritage Canada's Cultural Capitals program for 2009, and also to provide background information to support creation of a community-wide cultural plan towards 2010 and beyond. It is also intended to provide a snapshot of potential ACH granting opportunities over the next five years, to support the community's strategic cultural initiatives.

2.1 Scope

The inventory includes the how, what, why, when and where of ACH programs in Whistler, as well as how they are funded and their future plans. While it is recognized that commercial interests in art (e.g. bars, restaurants, galleries, studios and retail outlets) are an important element of the cultural experience, they are not included in the inventory at this time.

2.2 Methodology

Over a two-week period, from July 31 – Aug. 11 2006, a series of 25 interviews were held with individuals and organizational representatives contributing to Whistler’s “cultural sector.” Websites and relevant planning documents were also reviewed.

3.2 Public Art Policy

Approved by Council in 2004, the policies of Public Art Program address an overall goal of enriching the public environment and promoting awareness, understanding, access and enjoyment of art as part of everyday life for Whistler locals and visitors. Specific goals identified in the policy include:

- To identify and enhance the sense of community identity unique to Whistler, and to encourage artworks that reflect community and regional diversity, values, history, nature and culture.
- To be a catalyst in the creation of significant public spaces that are beautiful, thoughtful and ingenious through the integration of art with community planning and community building projects, and by the integration of art into the fabric of neighbourhoods;
- To create opportunities, challenges and encouragement for all types of artists and artistic expression, and for the creation of site specific works that promote relationships between the artwork and the public;
- To develop a coherent approach to public art in the community by providing fair and effective processes for selecting, purchasing, commissioning, maintaining and documenting public art that represents the best in aesthetic and technical quality;
- To encourage the use of public art by both the public and private sectors to ensure quality and innovation in urban design; and
- To maintain a program of public education about the Public Art Program that will ensure a high level of involvement by the community in the public art process and will encourage ownership and stewardship.

3.2.6 Whistler Event Tourism Strategy - 2008

A resort-wide event tourism strategy designed to help Whistler expand upon its ventures that complement tourism (i.e. events) in an effort to build and stabilize customer visits. This strategy evaluates the role of event tourism (as an economic driver for Whistler, consistent with the Resort’s Whistler2020 vision¹), explores the impact of event tourism on the Resort’s stakeholders, community and its guests, and provides recommendations for Whistler to reach its vision for events (“Whistler is an internationally recognized tourism destination – renowned for its superior quality and diverse events – making it a place to visit again and again”).

Specifically, it addresses the following goals for event tourism:

1. Grow and promote a portfolio of events that supports Whistler’s brand, values and needs, and enhances Whistler’s image (focusing on Whistler’s existing events).
2. Develop the infrastructure to support large events in Whistler.
3. Access funding to grow events in Whistler.
4. Streamline Community Partner roles and responsibilities to better serve events.

The complete Event Tourism Strategy is available online at www.whistler2010.com.

3.2.7 Whistler Arts Organizations and Facilities Review - 2009

In September of 2008 the Whistler Arts Council (WAC), with financial support from the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW), and a grant from the 2010 Legacies Now Catalyst Program, retained the firm of Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd. (PERC) to undertake a Functional review of Whistler Arts Organizations and Facilities.

While the client/consultant relationship was nominally between PERC and the WAC, the deliverable was meant to be provided to three “clients” for consideration; namely the WAC, the Maurice Young Millennium Place Society (MYMPS) and the RMOW. The goal of the project was to undertake a functional review of the MYMPS and WAC organizations to determine how they might co-exist within a shared community facility (Millennium Place) by building on synergies and sharing resources, thereby better serving the community’s cultural sector.

The intent of the review is to help build capacity within the cultural sector by strengthening organizational relationships and identifying ways to maximize use of an existing cultural facility. It is hoped it will also set the stage for developing a more comprehensive long-term cultural plan beyond 2010, to be funded as part of Whistler’s 2009 Cultural Capitals grant. Before proceeding with this longer-term post-Olympic/Paralympic cultural plan, it is important to determine the best long-term organizational model for operating the community’s major cultural facility. The following are excerpts from the full review document.

1) The Marketplace for Arts, Culture and Heritage Services in Whistler

There are essentially three market segments in Whistler with differing characteristics and driving forces. While this market segmentation applies broadly to many aspects of public and private services in the resort community, it is certainly applicable to an understanding of the audience for arts, culture and heritage services in Whistler.

The first market segment is the approximate 10,000 local residents, who call Whistler their current “home”. The second, is the approximate 20,000 recreational property owners, who visit on average about 60 days per year, and would call Whistler their “home away from home”. The third, is the roughly two million tourists who will hopefully return, but will enjoy the community for a few days or weeks at a time each year, and will not have a connection to the community as their home. It is important, when developing ACH services and products in Whistler, to segment the markets in order to be clear which segment or segments each is intended to meet. Arts, culture and heritage product planning in Whistler has generally been good at segmenting the markets, recognizing the differences, and strategizing how to serve each.

2) Whistler Arts Council (WAC)

WAC is a registered charity established in 1982 with a mandate to “build and integrate arts into the Whistler community”. It produces a number of festivals, events and programs throughout the year including a Performance Series, Out of Bounds, Whistler Celebration 2010, the Children’s Art Festival, ArtWalk, Summer Art Workshops on the Lake, ARTrageous, and Bizarre Bazaar. As the community’s “umbrella” arts organization, WAC advocates for the arts, local artists and the local community in Whistler and throughout the Sea to Sky Corridor. It provides the community with access to the arts, and gives regional artists opportunities to present their work to local and visitor audiences. It provides resources and information to the community, outside organizations and local artists by acting as a referral service, co-programmer and information network. WAC is the “lead agent” for implementing arts strategies within Whistler’s 2010 strategic framework, as well as for fulfilling the Arts, Culture & Heritage (ACH) Strategy within the Whistler2020 Comprehensive Sustainability Plan. WAC’s operating budget in 2008 was \$999,674. About \$480,000 of this total came from the RMOW in the form of grants and fee for service agreements. It has a full-time staff of five, plus several part-time contractors. It is currently based at Millennium Place.

3) The Maurice Young Millennium Place Society (MYMPS)

MYMPS was incorporated under the Society Act in 2000 and received charitable status in 2003. It operates with a mandate to “enhance the quality of life of our residents and visitors by encouraging, supporting, building and operating innovative programs that challenge, engage and stimulate our community to develop their creative, inspirational and intellectual awareness.” Its vision states that

“By 2012, the MYMPS will be a leading centre of excellence for cultural programs in British Columbia” and its two-part mission is as “a catalyst to enrich community life and enhance the resort experience through strategic partnerships, community engagement and arts programming” and as the operator of Millennium Place “as Whistler’s centre for Arts, Culture and Inspiration.” The facility which MYMPS operates, called Millennium Place, but often referred to as MY Place, currently includes a 250-seat presentation theatre, a theatre foyer (which serves as a public art gallery), a daycare, a youth centre, two multipurpose rental rooms, a office for a local radio station and several offices which are used by MYMPS as well as community groups. The facility has about 12,500 square feet of usable spaces as outlined in Figure One.

4) The Role of the RMOW

The RMOW provides annual funding support to both WAC and MYMPS. Fiscal realities have forced the RMOW to reduce its 2008 funding of both WAC and MYMPS by 30%, resulting in significant financial challenges for both organizations, and a commitment by their respective Boards to explore ways to share administration and functional use of MY Place, thereby making it more of a dedicated community cultural centre. At the same time, preparing for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games is raising the bar of what is required of the community in delivering cultural programming. Combined, these two situations provide an opportunity to explore new ways of structuring the cultural sector to enhance its capacity to fulfill both 2010 cultural opportunities and its longer-term Whistler2020 vision. WAC’s most pressing challenge in the fall of 2008 was to find a new administrative home. While a move into Millennium Place early in December resolved this immediate issue, its strength lies in programming, not facility management, and it is concerned about being encumbered by issues not related to its core competencies. For MYMPS, the most pressing challenge is to maximize the “highest and best” use of the facility and strengthen its core competencies by:

Complete details of the facility review report can be reviewed online at www.whistler2010.com

3.3 For More Background

1. Existing OCP Policies – 1993 – Section 3.2.1
2. Cultural Feasibility Study – 1997 – Section 3.2.2
3. Whistler Arts Plan – 2001 – Section 3.2.3
4. Whistler 2020 Statements – 2005 – Section 3.2.4
5. The Whistler Cultural Landscape – 2006 – Section 3.2.5
6. Whistler Event Tourism Strategy – 2008 – Section 3.2.6
7. Whistler Arts Organizations & Facilities Review – 2009 – Section 3.2.7

4.0 EDUCATION

4.1 Current Context

Whistler is a unique community with a well-educated population that expects high quality, diverse and affordable opportunities to meet lifelong learning and formal education needs. There are tensions between delivering learning opportunities that are diverse and of superior quality, yet affordable, especially when supported by a relatively small permanent population of 10,000. However, accomplishing the right balance is a critical part of ensuring that individuals and families will remain in Whistler and contribute to the vibrancy and social fabric of the resort. Along with challenges, there are also opportunities to market learning offerings to visitors. This will complement and diversify Whistler's tourism economy, support local learning initiatives, and enhance the visitor experience. A community's 'knowledge base' is regarded as a fundamental factor for effective local development* and adapting to change. Therefore, strengthening Whistler as a learning community to further develop local human and social capital will help to build the resort community's capacity to achieve the shared vision of success and sustainability

According to Whistler2020 monitoring:

Permanent Residents

- Overall satisfaction amongst permanent residents is 34% with 6% 'very satisfied' and 28% 'somewhat satisfied'.
- Compared to other community attributes, this question scored the highest proportion of dissatisfied residents at 34%.
- In the 2006 survey, the top 3 choices for additional learning opportunities included: Accredited college and university courses 53%, Technical and trades courses 47%, Professional and skills development 44%.

Whistler's current schools:

Myrtle Philip Community School

6195 Lorimer Road, Whistler

Website: <http://www.myrtlephilipcommunityschool.bc.ca/>

Spring Creek Community School

1509 Spring Creek Drive, Whistler, BC V0N 1B1

Website: <http://springcreekcommunityschool.bc.ca>

Whistler Secondary—A Community School

8000 Alpine Way Whistler, BC V0N 1B8

Website: <http://whistlersecondary.bc.ca>

Whistler Waldorf School

7326 Kirkpatrick Way Whistler, BC V0N 1B7

Website: <http://www.whistlerwaldorf.com/>

4.2 Existing Education Policies

4.2.1 Existing OCP - 1993

As the Municipality matures as a community it is important to ensure that a wide range of educational opportunities is locally available. The following are policy statements in the existing OCP regarding education:

4.6.1 The Municipality will work with the School District and encourage the development of educational facilities, including the existing and proposed schools shown on Schedule E, and assist in securing additional school sites as required.

4.6.2 The Municipality will encourage the development of additional preschool and day care facilities for children in the Municipality.

4.6.3 The Municipality will encourage post secondary education institutions in the community.

4.6.4 The Municipality will consider private education facilities, which will enhance the community and the resort.

4.2.2 Whistler 2020 Policy Statements - 2005

The Whistler 2020 strategy and vision document outlines the following vision for educational opportunities in Whistler by 2020:

1. Diverse, affordable and accessible lifelong learning opportunities exist to meet the community's needs.
2. A learning culture is nurtured and promoted locally and regionally through diverse formal and informal opportunities and leverages Whistler's international stature.
3. The early learning needs of children in the resort community are met.
4. A high quality kindergarten through post-secondary education system offers a diversity of programs that meet the needs and expectations of the community.
5. Residents and visitors have many opportunities to actively learn about the resort community, the natural environment and First Nations culture.
6. Opportunities exist within developed and recreational areas for people to learn about the natural environment.
7. Learning opportunities contribute to the local economy and attract visitors to the resort community for learning vacations.
8. Learning opportunities foster collaboration, trust and community engagement and build the community's capacity for achieving Whistler's vision of success and sustainability for future generations.

Source: www.whistler2020.ca

4.2.3 Whistler Child Care Needs Assessment - 2009

In March 2009, the municipality released a Whistler Childcare Needs Assessment Report, which outlined a local child-care crisis because of a shortage of qualified staff, a critical shortage of spaces for children age 0 to 2 and a lack of housing for child care staff.

The Whistler Child Care Needs Assessment recognizes that the current licensed child care situation is in need of immediate attention. Whistler has licensed child care spaces for 18% of children, ages 0-12, who reside in the area. Of particular note is that there is only space for 8% of infants and toddlers. Given that there are an estimated 872 children who are under the age of 12 in Whistler, the limited availability of child care is of great concern. To this end, the Resort Municipality of Whistler has funded a child care needs assessment in order to gather feedback from parents and child care providers. This feedback will assist in future planning to improve the current child care situation in Whistler.

Child care has been receiving increasing attention in numerous municipalities throughout British Columbia. With societal change and particularly with more mothers entering the workforce, there is a need to address the availability of out of home care for children. The positive impact that high quality child care has on child development is clearly demonstrated in child development literature. At the same time, the absence of child care has been shown to have a high cost for our society. Specifically, the absence of high quality child care has several negative implications for children and families including the inability of parents to enter the workforce, increased isolation for parents and children, increased risks of poverty and the potential for children to lose out on developmental opportunities.

Whistler faces additional unique challenges in that it is a resort town with a high cost of living compared to the rest of B.C. Further, a significant number of parents work alternate hours that reflect a service industry (e.g. shift work or extended hours), there are fewer extended family members to assist with child care, and there are limited opportunities for affordable housing.

There are six licensed child care providers in Whistler. Two of these providers offer occasional care; one provider offers out of school care; two providers offer group care for children ages 3 to 5; and one provider offers infant toddler care and group care. Feedback from child care providers indicates:

- A critical shortage of infant/toddler care.
- An impending shortage of group daycare with the planned closure of one program and the potential closure of another program.
- The existence of adequate school-aged child care.
- In regards to challenges faced by child care providers, the key issues are:
 - Recruitment and retention of child care staff, particularly for infant/toddler care.
 - Cumbersome process for having out-of-province and out-of-country ECE staff credentials assessed in order for them to receive recognition of equivalent ECE qualifications in B.C.
 - A lack of affordable housing for potential child care staff.

Six key issues in Whistler have been identified and are ranked in terms of priority. The first two issues below are inextricably linked and require simultaneous efforts in order to effectively address the lack of infant/toddler care. The first focus must be on recruiting more staff to Whistler. Higher pay and low cost housing is an absolute necessity. Further to this, offering attractive incentives for interested residents to Whistler to go into child care is highly recommended.

1. Shortage of child care staff, particularly in infant/toddler care and ECE licensed staff.
2. Shortage of affordable housing for child care staff.
3. Critical shortage of infant/toddler child care spaces.
4. Shortage of group care spaces and the increased upcoming shortage as a result of the planned/potential closures of Teddy Bear Daycare and the Whistler Children's Centre Spring Creek Group Daycare.
5. A need to review best use of resources in the out-of-school care program.
6. High cost of child care for families

The following are the key recommendations from the Child Care Needs Assessment report:

- Set aside dedicated, affordable and appropriate housing for child care providers and ECE staff.
- Offer municipal or local business scholarships that supplement government/institutional bursaries to Whistler residents who want to pursue an ECE diploma.
- As a municipality, continue to advocate at the government level for the development of a more efficient way to have non-B.C. trained ECEs' credentials evaluated.
- Explore the development of network of licensed family care homes.
- Examine ways to increase the wages and benefits for child care staff.
- Develop more centre-based child care spaces after the above child care staff shortages issues are in the process of being addressed.
- Continue to support and maintain the Teddy Bear Daycare and the Whistler Children's Centre Spring Creek group daycare in order that critical shortages do not develop for this age group in addition to infant/toddlers.
- The Village, Spring Creek and Alpine are the top three areas which Whistler parents identify as desirable locations for child care. Efforts should be made to look at maximizing child care capacity in those areas.

- For new developed areas (Cheakamus Crossing, Fitzsimmons Walk and Rainbow), the provision of child care space should be a requirement for all developers in order that this space can be leased at an extremely low cost to non-profit child care provider programs.
- Work with employers in the Whistler area to examine ways of offering employees a child care benefit that would offset the costs of child care.
- Examine ways to increase financial support for child care providers through the development of a child care fund.
- As a municipality, take on an active and persistent leadership role in advocating for more funds and support for child care from the provincial government.

4.3 For More Background

The following documents are online at whistler2010.com

1. Current OCP – 1993 – Section 4.2.1
2. Whistler 2020 Document – 2005 – Section 4.2.2
3. Whistler Child Care Needs Assessment – 2009 – Section 4.2.3

5.0 PUBLIC SAFETY

5.1 Current Context

The Whistler community is unique in British Columbia. As a destination resort its permanent population of 10,000 has an unusually large component of young resort employees (when compared to other BC communities), many who are away from home for the first time and lack traditional support networks of family and friends. In addition, there is a small but growing group of seniors, who have chosen to retire in the community. On peak days in the winter, Whistler's population can more than quadruple, with the addition of resort visitors as well as seasonal and commuting employees. Whistler's health and social services face challenges in meeting the particular needs of all of these groups.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as "A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This suggests the need for an integrated and holistic approach to meeting health and social needs, and will require the efforts of the entire Whistler community, including the providers of physical and mental health care, social services, and spiritual offerings. It will also call for a high level of integration with other Whistler2020 strategies.

According to Whistler2020 monitoring:

- The total number of reported criminal code incidents in 2008 measured in at 1,985. This amount resulted in 78 reported incidents per 1,000 residents and visitors.
- The three year average increased slightly, and year to year the total number of incidents decreased by 16%. The per 1,000 residents/visitors decreased on a three year average by 3% and on a year to year basis by 14%.
- The slight three year average increase is due to a rise in the number of 'Other Crimes' (vandalism, counterfeit currency, disturbing the peace, property damage, mischief, and harassment), all categories 'Other Crimes', 'Property Crimes', and 'Violent Crimes' decreased on a year to year basis.

Benchmarks

- Incidents per 1,000 population : Squamish 154, Pemberton 85. Total and rate trends decreased for the Province as a whole over the same

5.2 Existing Public Safety Policies

5.2.1 Existing OCP - 1993

The following are policy statements in the existing OCP regarding public safety:

- 4.10.1 The Municipality will encourage the development of police facilities in the location shown in Schedule E.
- 4.10.2 The Municipality will examine and provide for the costs and implications of taking on the responsibility of policing costs once the census population reaches 5,000.
- 4.10.3 The Municipality will maintain and upgrade the equipment for the Whistler Fire Department as required.

5.2.2 Whistler2020 Policy Statements - 2005

The following policy vision statements regarding public safety are within the Whistler2020 document:

1. Community members and visitors maintain and improve their physical, mental, spiritual and social health through prevention and treatment services.
2. Community members and visitors learn about and enjoy experiences with other cultures and generations through activities and events.
3. Community members understand and respect diverse views and are encouraged to do so through a variety of initiatives.
4. Chemical-free, organically-grown food produced in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor is available year-round at a price affordable to community members.
5. Community members and visitors are civil and law abiding, and they respect each other's physical space and emotional boundaries.
6. Community members eat healthy food, exercise and engage in leisure and other stress relieving activities that assist in preventing illness and they avoid the abusive use of substances that evidence indicates have negative effects on physical and mental health.
7. The resort community is safe for both visitors and residents, and is prepared for potentially unavoidable emergency events.
8. Whistler is accessible and inclusive for community members and visitors with disabilities.
9. Whistler organizations and stakeholders work together to meet the health and social needs of community members and visitors.
10. Community members accept responsibility for their own health, and that of other members of the community, by participating in the activities identified in this description of success.

Source: www.whistler2020.ca

5.2.3 Whistler Fire Rescue Service

The Whistler Fire Rescue Service (WFRS) consists of both Career and Paid on Call (POC) staff. The department is run by Fire Chief, Rob Whitton, Assistant Fire Chief Geoff Playfair and Assistant Fire Chief Sheila Kirkwood. The department has 21 career firefighters and approximately 60 paid on-call staff. The Whistler Fire Rescue Service protect the Municipality of Whistler and have Mutual Aid Agreements with both Squamish and Pemberton.

The Whistler Fire Rescue Service (WFRS) is comprised of the following three fire halls and the noted equipment:

Hall #1 – 4315 Blackcomb Way, Whistler Village
 Quint – 75ft Aerial platform (4WD)
 Rescue – Heavy Rescue equipment
 Engine – Pump truck

Hall #2 – 8900 Highway 99, Alpine
 Quint – 65ft stick aerial
 Cafs' – Compressed Air Foam System Apparatus

Hall #3 – 1505 Spring Creek Drive, Spring Creek
 Quint – 75ft Aerial platform (4WD)
 Engine – pump truck

The WFRS is dedicated to promoting fire and life safety in our resort community as well as mitigating problems when they occur. This is accomplished through various public education methods listed below which includes a fire prevention program and, when incidents occur, emergency response.

1. Fire and Life Safety

The Fire and Life Safety proponent provides and promotes a variety of public education programs within the community in addition to participating in a wide variety of community oriented events.

2. Emergency Preparedness

Emergency management for the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) is a prime function of the Fire Rescue Service. The Fire Chief is the Area Coordinator for Emergency Management. The upper floor of the Public Safety Building can be converted into an Emergency Operations Centre in the event of a local disaster. Extensive planning is the best preparation for Community emergencies. This involves both planning and response in the event of a major incident within the resort community. A part time Emergency Coordinator helps with this. All Services within the RMOW have a role to play in both preparation and response. The Fire Service provides some of the coordination.

3. Fire Prevention

The prevention program primary intention is to partner with our community to increase the level of fire safety for both the public and our firefighters at the same time as protecting property and the environment through the prevention of fires. In order to achieve this, we have a program of fire inspections. This program is mainly delivered by our firefighter/inspectors but rightfully engages building owners to provide solutions. WFRS also reviews Fire Safety Plans, working with owners to help them plan for the safe occupation and use of their buildings.

4. Wildland/Urban Interface

Whistler is built in an interface zone. Our forests are part of what makes this community a highly desirable place to live. It's also what makes it hazardous. While our forests are an amenity for residents and tourists alike, it is nothing more than a source of fuel for a fire. Municipal wildfire precautions are governed by the BC Forest Service Forest Fire Hazard Rating System.

5. Residential Overcrowding and Unsafe Uses

Due to the price of real estate and limited market, WFRS get many calls regarding issues with housing. Overcrowding, illegal construction and fire safety are generally cited. The Fire Service Act provides specific authority to inspect premises to ascertain whether or not any of the following conditions exists or not.

6. Incident Response

WFRS staff regularly train and maintain equipment in order to effectively respond to a wide variety of 911 emergency calls.

7. Seasonal Restrictions

Campfires are permitted in Whistler, subject to:

- Forest Fire Hazard rating being either low or moderate.
- The campfire is located in an area that is safe from fire hazards.
- Smoke from the fire does not interfere with a neighbour's right to clean air.
- The campfire must be of reasonable size (ie: less than .5 m diameter and .5 m tall).
- Fuel should be seasoned wood. Burning of garden scraps and debris is not permitted (see below).

In all cases, if associated activities such as noise, consumption of alcohol or litter the responsible parties will be dealt with under the appropriate Bylaws. In the case of continuing issues around campfires, the Fire Chief can order a ban on fires at a particular property.

8. Backyard burning

Due to air quality issues, backyard burning of garden debris is not permitted in Whistler. Garden debris must be delivered to the transfer station at the Callaghan, or as otherwise provided by the Municipality.

9. Recreational Forest Closures

The Resort Municipality of Whistler is committed to maintaining public access to our trail network as much as possible. Should the Provincial Government issue a recreational closure for the forest district, the RMOW will support the closure and efforts to safeguard our forests. Signs at major trailheads will assist with alerting people of a closure. At the same time, trails on the valley floor, such as the Valley Trail as well as Lost Lake trails will remain open.

5.2.4 RMOW Wildfire Community Protection Plan - 2005

Overall the probability of large wildfire risk in the community is considered low although the consequences of such a disaster could be devastating.

B.A. Blackwell and Associates Ltd. were retained to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan in consultation with Municipal staff from Fire Rescue, Parks Department, Demonstration Forest and other support staff as required. The project was funded by the RMOW and a supplementary grant from the Union of B.C. Municipalities.

The complete Wildfire Community Protection Plan is available online at www.whistler2010.com.

5.2.5 Whistler RCMP Detachment

The Resort Municipality of Whistler oversees the local RCMP detachment. More than 9,500 employees proudly serve in BC providing Municipal, Provincial and Federal policing needs in areas that range from isolated Aboriginal communities and coastal villages to major cities.

5.2.6 RMOW Emergency Plan - 2005

Responding to an emergency event in Whistler is the responsibility of the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW). Emergency events generally progress in stages from local to provincial to federal levels of government response. The severity of the emergency and the availability of resources primarily determine when, and to what extent, provincial and federal government support as well as other various support agencies become involved.

The Resort Municipality of Whistler's Emergency Plan and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Plan outline the authority and responsibility of RMOW's municipal departments and external support agencies in the event of a major emergency. The plans highlight both the expected and unexpected disasters that may occur in Whistler and address the policies and procedures to be followed for each.

Assumptions that were made in the development of these plans include:

- Emergency protocols for routine emergency events already exist within each municipal department and external support agency's standard operating procedures.
- Municipal departments and external support agencies will respond to routine emergency events based on the above noted Departmental and agency procedures; and, will look to implementing the Emergency Plan and the EOC Plan when typical resources and response measures do not meet the needs of the emergency event.

The EOC Plan provides guidance and direction to RMOW municipal departments and external support organizations regarding their primary emergency roles, which are to:

1. Save lives, reduce suffering, minimize damage to property, mitigate damage to the environment and reduce economic consequences.
2. Provide an understanding of the authorities, working relationships, responsibilities and functions of municipal departments, senior levels of government and various support organizations relative to a major emergency.
3. Outline RMOW's authority and responsibilities to act in emergencies and disasters, as well as provide for continuity of municipal government.
4. Optimize the management of response operations including activation of the Emergency Operations Centre, coordination of multi-jurisdiction activity, and mobilization of critical resources.
5. Conduct orderly and controlled evacuations of local residents and visitors to the community, as deemed necessary.
6. Ensure that evacuees are provided with essential services including shelter, food, clothing, first aid, family reunification and emotional support.
7. Expedite the restoration of services and facilities as soon as possible following the termination of a response to a major emergency.
8. Guide ongoing efforts to train municipal personnel and volunteers in their emergency roles and responsibilities, exercising emergency plans, procedures and protocols

6.0 FOOD SYSTEMS AND FOOD SECURITY

6.1 Current Context

6.1.1 Provincial Context - 2008

The B.C. Agriculture Plan was released on February 15, 2008. This plan outlines a visionary view for the future of the agriculture industry, focused on promoting B.C. food products, making the agriculture industry a leader in reducing climate change impacts, and reconnecting British Columbians with locally grown food. The B.C. Agriculture Plan: Growing a Healthy Future for B.C. Families has five key themes that form the foundation for 23 strategies and 68 action items for sustaining the agriculture industry:

- 1) Producing local food in a changing world – Promoting B.C. agriculture and food products to support B.C. producers in supplying fresh, healthy food directly to consumers; and developing a “food miles” program to create public awareness of the distance food products have been transported, and the effect on greenhouse gas emissions.
- 2) Meeting environmental and climate challenges – Shifting farm practices to turn agricultural residues like plant material, animal and organic waste into renewable energy; and investing in environmental farm planning, to encourage producers to adopt more environmentally friendly ways of handling their livestock, fertilizer, farm buildings and engine emissions.
- 3) Building innovative and profitable family farm businesses – Supporting the agriculture industry in addressing B.C.’s farm labour shortage; and supporting agriculture’s diverse sectors in developing sector specific strategic plans to work towards sustained profitability.
- 4) Building First Nations agriculture capacity – Establishing a program to certify First Nations food products prior to the 2010 Olympics; and delivering a “local foods for healthy eating” program for First Nations, including community gardens.
- 5) Bridging the urban/agriculture divide – Increasing funding for agriculture in the classroom programs to reconnect children with the source of their food; and reviewing zoning bylaws and farm use bylaws to ensure the regulatory structure supports the sustainable growth of farming in B.C.

6.1.2 Regional District Context

According to the 2006 Canadian Census of Agriculture, there are 129 farms in Squamish Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) Areas C and D (the areas reporting farm income in the region). The total area of farms reporting is 19,585 hectares, with an average farm size being 152 hectares. Of the total farm area, 3,165 hectares are in crops, 5,390 head of cattle and 34 pigs. Gross farm receipts were reported at \$7,891,384 (excluding forest products sold) and the total farm capital (in 2006 market dollars) was \$173,726,555.

The Community Food Action Initiative: CFAI began in 2006 as a way of improving food security in the Sea to Sky Corridor. Community Meetings took place in May 2006 in Squamish, Whistler and Pemberton. These meetings outlined each communities assets and a dream for food security in the future. An Open Space event took place in Whistler on May 30-31. The purpose of this event was to have participants discuss the regions assets and create an action plan for the future to support corridor wide or community activities. The CFAI report contains a complete listing of recommendations and vision statements from the meeting.

6.1.3 Municipal Context

Mountain resort communities in general, and Whistler in particular have several unique aspects when it comes to the nature of their food supply, distribution and consumption patterns. Whistler has a number of existing strengths with regard to food issues which can be built upon and there are also a number of challenges:

Existing Strengths

- The cultural experience of food (especially dining out) is already a big part of the Whistler experience
- Whistler Village's compact urban layout designed for tourists provides good opportunities for food related celebrations.
- There are already a number of food-related initiatives including a food buying club, community kitchens, the "Locals Discount", Farmer's Market, Food and Wine Celebration, 2 greenhouses (growing food for food bank and local gardeners), a food bank and organic food delivery.
- Food is made more affordable to residents through discount systems such as the "Whistler Card" for locals.
- Awareness and knowledge of sustainability issues in Whistler means that there would likely be support for food related initiatives that advanced the sustainability agenda.
- Whistler already has a number of celebration events including food celebrations and the high level of social capital in Whistler means that food related initiatives have a high chance of success.
- There are many food outlets in Whistler including a number of high-end restaurants. This means that spending on food and beverages is high and that food price is not the only consideration.

Existing Challenges

- Very little productive soil capacity (no land in ALR) within the Municipality itself although there is productive farmland in Squamish/Lillooet Regional District including high quality farmland around Pemberton.
- Poor growing conditions due to climatic extremes.
- As a result of the above, most food is shipped into Whistler by truck from the Lower Mainland and Pemberton.
- The tourism industry has expectations in terms of food quality, food availability (i.e. year round availability of non seasonal foods).
- Affordability is a real issue for Whistler residents and workers, especially for the large service sector (30% of Whistler residents work in the Accommodation and Food/Beverage establishments). The cost of an average family grocery purchase was examined in several BC communities¹, and the Whistler cost was found to be 17% greater than the average of those communities. In addition, other expenditures (especially accommodation) are higher putting further pressure on incomes. Whistler residents therefore, spend on average 13% of their incomes on food compared to 11% for residents in the GVRD. Restaurant meal prices are higher than those in the Lower Mainland (especially in peak seasons).
- Whistler food prices are likely sensitive to higher fuel costs because all food is shipped a fair distance. If fuel prices rise, this will impact food prices more than communities that produce a lot of food locally.
- As of 2008, 13 – SLRD area farms were using the workbook and 3 riparian management projects were implemented by SLRD area farms.

- As of 2008, one food service operator of 186 was participating in the Green Table Program and five were committed to serving sustainable, ocean-friendly seafood through the "Ocean Wise" Program. Whistler2020/Green Table Pilot project will launch in 2009.

6.2 Existing Policies

6.2.1 Existing OCP - 1993

Agricultural and food policies were not developed for the municipality in the existing OCP.

6.2.2 Whistler 2020 Policy Statement - 2008

Initially, Whistler 2020 did not explicitly address Food and Agriculture related issues. Through the development of the Whistler2020 Food Strategy and task force, producers, processors, chefs, restaurateurs, policy developers and other decision-makers are working together to bring our food system closer to home.

With a strong focus on integrating the agricultural history, production capacity and indigenous knowledge in our neighbour communities of Mount Currie and Pemberton and the immense capacity of Whistler's internationally recognized food service industry, the Food Strategy is a coordinated, collaborative regional effort which will create stronger bonds between food producers, retailers and eaters. Through enhanced food sovereignty and the support of our regional partners, our communities will look at food, its delivery and preparation as an integral part of our regional identity and market opportunity. Food actions will create more resilient, self-reliant communities which support all aspects of the local food system from farm to fork.

The following Description of Success was adopted as part of Whistler2020 in 2008: In 2020, a co-operative and collaborative community-supported bioregional food system improves the health of communities, the environment and individuals over time, involving a shared effort to build a locally based, self-reliant, secure food system and economy. By this time:

1. All community members have dignified access to sufficient, nutritious, culturally appropriate, safe and affordable food.
2. Regional agricultural land is preserved, enhanced and replenished and encroachment on nature is minimized.
3. Opportunities for food production on both protected farmland and developed lands are encouraged.
4. The food system is managed through best practices to maximize biodiversity.
5. Materials, synthetic chemicals and persistent compounds in the food system are proactively managed to protect and promote human and ecosystem health.
6. Waste from the food system is continually decreasing, what remains is being increasingly diverted from landfills, and material inputs are progressively more sustainable.
7. Water is used efficiently and water quality is protected throughout all aspects of the food system.
8. Energy use and related emissions are being reduced within the food system and are transitioning toward renewable energy.
9. Community members continually learn about food, its cycles and the complexity of its social, economic and environmental benefits and impacts.
10. The food system and related activities enhance the regional economy, increasing regional jobs and wealth from farm to fork.

11. Regional food producers, retailers and First Nations traditions are celebrated and supported in the marketplace as valuable components of the region's identity, health, vitality and economic prosperity.
12. The region holds a shared vision for the food system and works together to achieve that vision and share it with visitors.

Source: www.whistler2020.ca

6.2.3 Food Strategy Scoping Study Holland Bars - 2005

When Whistler2020 was first crafted, it did not explicitly address Food and Agriculture related issues. To address this gap, The Resort Municipality of Whistler hired Holland Barrs consultants to consider the scope and draft content of a Mountain Resort Food and Agriculture Strategy for Whistler. The purpose of this scoping document was to develop the rationale for why a sustainable food strategy is necessary for a mountain resort community, and to scope the initial opportunities that would form the foundation work for a future strategy. However, there are many opportunities to relate food and agriculture to the five priorities and the W2020 directions as noted below.

The Food and Agricultural Strategy study identified the following as strategic opportunities for a sustainable food system for Whistler:

1. Build broad community support for local food and farming.
2. Create space and opportunities for both commercial and non-commercial, local horticultural production.
3. Support local and regional farms and farmers.
4. Ensure food security for all residents.
5. Explore food related local economic development opportunities.
6. Encourage ethical consumption.
7. Invest in food related initiatives in the Athletes Village.
8. Encourage the public celebration of local food and food culture.
9. Manage Food Related Transportation More Effectively.

The Food and Agriculture Strategy document can be reviewed online at www.whistler2020.com.

A Path Forward

The above noted strategies will take concerted effort and time to put in place. Therefore, Council will need to consider additional policy framework and goals as part of the OCP update.

6.2.4 Existing Community Food Initiatives

Affordability Initiatives

1. **Food Buying Club:** The Food Buying Club assists financially restricted Whistler families to access groceries at more affordable prices than currently available in Whistler. A group of 10 families who meet the financial need criteria (same as Recreation Credit Fund) pay a small membership fee to cover banking fees and supplies and sign on for volunteer duties. Families accessing the Food Bank on a more consistent basis are given first priority.
2. **Community Kitchens:** Community Kitchens is a fun cooking session where participants learn to cook healthy meals with low cost items. It teaches nutrition and promotes eating well. The program is organized and run by Whistler Community Services Society- their philosophy is to bring back or create a joy for cooking and making healthy food choices. For more information, call Whistler Community Services at 604-932-0113.

3. **Food Bank:** The Whistler Food Bank is available to Whistler residents in need and is supported by the Whistler Blackcomb Foundation, the American Friends of Whistler, Couloir Project Management and many local individuals and businesses. Food is distributed on the first and third Mondays of every month from the trailer behind Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church on Lorimer Road, from 11:00am to 1:00pm.

4. **The “Local’s Discount”:** Many Whistler businesses currently offer an informal “local’s discount”, which usually amounts to a 10-20% savings for those who request it. Other incentives are also informally offered, such as lowered prices for repeat business.

Other Initiatives

1. **Whistler Farmer's Market:** The Whistler Farmer's Market is held on Sundays 11 AM to 4 PM from June 20th to October 10th. The Whistler Farmer's Market is part of the BC Farmers' Market Association. All the participating vendors from Lions Bay to Lytton have to make, bake or grow their wares. The idea is to feature local artisan talents and farmer produce - whether its vegetables, fruits, flowers, paintings, craft furniture or wines. The emphasis is on good quality without a factory label.

2. **Community Greenhouses:** The Whistler Community Services Society continues with its very successful community greenhouse program. This project grows fresh organic vegetables for the Food Bank from March to November in 20' x 40' greenhouses. Garden boxes are also rented to community members to grow their own veggies. A portion of the produce grown goes to the Food Bank; excess produce is sold to a local grocery store and at the local Farmers Market. We have three greenhouses (two in Spruce Grove and 1 at Myrtle Philip School). There are a total of 71 beds that have been rented by community members for \$50 for the season. All organic soil, seeds, fertilizer and instruction are included.

3. **RMOW Regional Composting System:** The Resort Municipality of Whistler began operation of a new municipal composting facility in November 2008. This facility composts biosolids from Whistler's wastewater treatment, residential and commercial organic waste, and wood waste. The closed system composter will divert waste from the landfill, effectively treat Whistler's biosolids, provide an opportunity for businesses and residents to compost organic waste, and produce a number of high quality soil amendments for sale. "Whistler is leading the way with a facility, which showcases the full cycle of waste management. Seeing our biosolids, organic waste, and wood waste go into this system to produce compost or biofuel that can be sold and used locally or regionally is something our community can be proud of," said Whistler Mayor Ken Melamed.

4. **The 2004 Solid Waste Composition Study** found that approximately 25% of the waste being sent to landfill is compostable. Of this 25%, 4% is residential and 21% is from commercial sources (restaurants, grocery stores, and landscaping companies). Based on this study, focusing on diverting the waste from restaurants, grocery stores, and landscaping companies to the composting operation will make a significant difference to the amount of waste we currently send to landfill.

5. **Cornucopia:** Cornucopia is Whistler's premier wine and food extravaganza held in the fall since 1996. The annual event is a unique opportunity to mingle, mix and learn from acclaimed chefs, sommeliers, vintners and restaurateurs' visiting Whistler or Whistler locals. Featuring a sumptuous variety of hands-on seminars, fascinating winemaker dinners, gala tasting events and sizzling after-parties, Cornucopia offers something for both the experienced gourmet and those seeking to better appreciate the epicurean delights of wine and food. <http://www.whistlercornucopia.com/index.html>

6. **Slow Food Cycle Sunday:** 12 farm families, countless artists and musicians, over 30 vendors of delicious food and drink, 80 volunteers, and one well-placed sprinkler combined to give 3000 riders a day to remember in Pemberton. Growers did incredible jobs hosting and feeding hundreds of visitors

to their farms, and showcasing the fruits of their labours. We are looking forward to the sixth annual Slow Food Cycle next year, on Sunday August 21st 2011. Same time, same place.

7. Feast in the Mountains: showcases BC's culinary bounty by transforming Whistler's Rebagliati Park into a roaming gourmet sampling of local foods. Spend a summer's afternoon amidst BC's Coastal Mountains, wonder the park and savour the creations of BC's best. Visit each vendor booth comprising of award-winning chefs, farmers, food artisans, vintners and brewers for a sampling of their offerings.

8. Feast in the Mountains, raises funds for FarmFolk/CityFolk's work, which includes protecting farmland, researching alternative methods of farmland tenure, securing organic seed for BC farmers, and promoting 'eat local' educational programs. <http://feastinthemountains.com/>

9. Pemberton Farms: Food is sold at the farm gate of a number of local farms in Pemberton. http://www.pemberton.ca/var/communityFiles/pemberton_farmers_institute.pdf
Sturdy's North Arm Farm offers farm visits as well as farm gate sales. <http://www.northarmfarm.com/>

10. Food Sectors Getting Greener: Greener production, presentation and food programming is gaining momentum into Sea to Sky Country. The following are examples of such programs:

1. Ocean Wise: A program managed by the Vancouver Aquarium, Ocean Wise aims to audit restaurant menus and replace non-sustainable seafood offerings with those deemed sustainable.
2. Green Table Network: The Green Table Network (GTN) is expanding both its reach and scope in early 2008. GTN will encourage effective, measurable steps in all aspects of foodservice sustainability, access, energy and water conservation, and recycling food waste. A primary benefit of membership will be access to Green Table Basic, a comprehensive, interactive introductory guide to the key ideas and actions required to implement sustainable operations.
3. Environmental Farm Plan: The British Columbia Agriculture Council manages and presents the Canada-British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan. Their goals are to encourage farmers and applicable agencies to proactively identify environmental opportunities and risks to be better stewards of the lands and how to reduce conflicts between agricultural and environmental interests.
4. Buying Local – Farmers Markets (2006): Producing and buying locally grown food supports local economies and communities, while reducing transportation costs and environmental impacts. The number of local farmers markets in BC has grown considerably in the past few years, increasing from about 60 in 2000 to 100 known markets in 2006, 28 of which are within the Fraser Basin.
5. GetLocal Website launched: GetLocal is a community of BC food producers, businesses and groups working together to promote eating locally in the Vancouver region. Their website www.getlocal.org offers education about the benefits of eating locally, a growing list of businesses that are producing and selling local food and many other resources to increase the "localness" of our food system.

6.5 For More Background

Whistler 2020 Food Strategy

<http://www.whistler2020.ca/whistler/site/strategy.acds?instanceid=3657493&context=3657492>

Where we are at: Whistler Food Strategy Current Reality- March 2008

http://www.whistler2020.ca/fp/aspen/public/getFile.asp?field_name=FILE&instanceid=7492511&context=3657492&AsAttachment=1

A Sustainable Food & Agriculture Strategy for Whistler- Scoping Document- 2005
Holland Barrs Planning Group Inc.

Vancouver Coastal Health Sea to Sky Food Action Report- 2006

http://www.whistler2020.ca/fp/aspen/public/getFile.asp?field_name=FILE&instanceid=7093373&context=3657492&AsAttachment=1

Community Food Systems Masters Report

http://www.whistler2020.ca/fp/aspen/public/getFile.asp?field_name=FILE&instanceid=7093376&context=3657492&AsAttachment=1

BC's Agriculture Plan 2008

http://www.whistler2020.ca/fp/aspen/public/getFile.asp?field_name=FILE&instanceid=7492548&context=3657492&AsAttachment=1

Whistler Community Services Society

<http://www.mywcss.org/>

RMOW Composting

http://www.whistler.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=567&Itemid=409

GetLocal BC

<http://www.getlocalbc.org/en/>

Green Table Network

<http://www.greentable.net/>

Whistler Farmers Market

<http://www.whistlerfarmersmarket.org/>

Slow Food Cycle

<http://www.slowfoodcyclesunday.com/>

Feast of the Mountains

<http://feastinthemountains.com/>

Cornucopia: <http://www.whistlercornucopia.com/index.html>

7.0 HEALTH AND SOCIAL

7.1 Current Context

Whistler's health and social services face challenges in meeting the particular needs of many groups. The Whistler community is unique in British Columbia. As a destination resort its permanent population of 10,000 has an unusually large component of young resort employees (when compared to other BC communities), many who are away from home for the first time and lack traditional support networks of family and friends. In addition, there is a small but growing group of seniors, who have chosen to retire in the community. On peak days in the winter, Whistler's population can more than quadruple, with the addition of resort visitors as well as seasonal and commuting employees. The World Health Organization defines health as "A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This suggests the need for an integrated and holistic approach to meeting health and social needs, and will require the efforts of the entire Whistler community, including the providers of physical and mental health care, social services, and spiritual offerings. It will also call for a high level of integration with other Whistler 2020 strategies.

According to Whistler2020 monitoring:

Permanent Residents

- The majority of permanent residents (84%) rate health status as 'very good' or better (35% excellent, 49% very good).
- The 2008 results show that amongst permanent residents, 89% have a strong sense of belonging (34% very strong, 55% somewhat strong).
- The three year average result increased between 2007 and 2008, while on a year to year basis compared to 2007, the proportion of residents feeling a strong sense of belonging increased significantly.

Seasonal Residents

- The majority of seasonal residents (77%) rate health status as very good or better (34% excellent, 43% very good)
- The 2008 results show that 76% of seasonal residents have a strong sense of belonging (16% very strong, 60% somewhat strong).

7.2 Existing Policies

7.2.1 Existing OCP Policies – 1993

The following are policy statements in the existing OCP regarding health and social issues:

4.5.5 The Municipality will encourage the designation of adequate and suitable sites for the development of churches.

4.5.8 The Municipality will encourage the maintenance of community health care and social service facilities in Whistler Village, and will support the development of additional health care and social service facilities as needed.

7.2.2 Whistler 2020 Policy Statement - 2005

The following vision and strategy statements from 2020 regarding health issues are in the Whistler 2020 document:

1. Community members and visitors maintain and improve their physical, mental, spiritual and social health through prevention and treatment services.
2. Community members and visitors learn about and enjoy experiences with other cultures and generations through activities and events.
3. Community members understand and respect diverse views and are encouraged to do so through a variety of initiatives.
4. Chemical-free, organically-grown food produced in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor is available year-round at a price affordable to community members.
5. Community members and visitors are civil and law abiding, and they respect each other's physical space and emotional boundaries.
6. Community members eat healthy food, exercise and engage in leisure and other stress relieving activities that assist in preventing illness and they avoid the abusive use of substances that evidence indicates have negative effects on physical and mental health.
7. The resort community is safe for both visitors and residents, and is prepared for potentially unavoidable emergency events.
8. Whistler is accessible and inclusive for community members and visitors with disabilities.
9. Whistler organizations and stakeholders work together to meet the health and social needs of community members and visitors.
10. Community members accept responsibility for their own health, and that of other members of the community, by participating in the activities identified in this description of success.

Source: www.whistler2020.ca

7.2.3 Health and Social Survey - 2006

Recreation Survey (January 2006) – 300 Whistler residents were telephone surveyed to assess physical activity levels and recreation behaviours. 87% of respondents reported that they engage in exercise 3-4 times per week or more. Those participating for health and wellness reasons accounted for 36%, while 24% exercise to stay fit. Factors that encourage physical activity were cited as: accessibility, affordability, convenience, information on options, and services to connect people together in activities. Overall 93% of those surveyed were satisfied with RMOW facilities and 78% agree with user fees for such services. The following are examples of health and wellness activities and programs in the municipality:

- Local and Unique Night-time Alternatives (LUNA) expanded lounge programming in the Youth Centre and requested funding in November 2005 to support permanent funding for LUNA programs. As of September 2005 - 907 members were registered and statistics show that in February 2005 – RCMP alcohol related calls were 20% lower on nights that LUNA programs were offered. The promotion of alternative and fun social activities for youth is ongoing.

- Whistler Community Services Society continues to provide (and expand) local programming, including the Adopt a Young Adult, Food Bank, Greenhouse Project, and Youth Outreach to name a few.
- Monitoring for West Nile Virus continued in 2005 in conjunction with the BC Centre for Disease Control, including an education campaign to keep the public informed. No reports of West Nile have been cited in BC at this time.
- Mental Health and Addiction Services in Whistler in 2005 expanded substance abuse counseling hours for the community. Work will be done in 2006 to explore a 24 hr on-call crisis worker for Whistler.
- The Whistler Blackcomb Foundation in conjunction with the Whistler Health Care Foundation have donated \$40,000 for the X ray C-arm, \$50,000 towards the helipad and \$32,000 for x-ray equipment as well as \$50,000 for teleradiology.
- Among the many programs offered through RMOW Parks & Recreation, was a new personal training workshop for participants aged 50+ to expand recreation and healthy lifestyle opportunities for seniors.
- The Whistler Skier's Chapel Society has recently been renamed the Whistler Interfaith Society and become a member of the InterSpiritual Centre of Vancouver Society. Among other activities, this group is investigating opportunities for developing a place of worship on Whistler or Blackcomb Mountain as well as for including an interspiritual place of worship within the proposed 2010 Athlete Village.
- For the first time ever, all local churches combined efforts to create a joint circular to advertise the 2006 Easter service schedule.
- The Whistler Wellness group has emerged over the last year and is now hosting an annual 'Whistler Wellness week'. The intent of the event is both to increase the economic impact of the Whistler wellness sector within the local economy, as well as to expand local awareness of the growing health and wellness opportunities, amenities and programs available in Whistler.

7.2.4 Vancouver Coastal Health 2009 - 2012 Service Plan

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) delivers health services to more than one million people, or one quarter of British Columbia's population. The geographic area covered by VCH includes 12 municipalities and four regional districts in the coastal mountain communities, Vancouver, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Richmond and 14 Aboriginal communities.

The health system in British Columbia is a complex network of skilled professionals, organizations and volunteers that work together to provide value for patients, the public and taxpayers. A key issue facing the health system is to continue improving the quality of services provided to citizens while also paying attention to the cost of the system.

The British Columbia health system continues to be challenged by an increasing demand for health services. The most significant drivers of rising demand are the aging population, the increasing need to provide care to the frail elderly, a rising burden of illness from chronic diseases and advances in

technology and pharmaceuticals that are enabling new procedures and treatments. The pressure is compounded by worldwide competition for health professionals and health care workers, and the need to maintain and improve the health system's physical infrastructure (i.e. buildings and equipment).

British Columbia also faces a challenge in ensuring that all parts of society and all populations can access health services and enjoy good health. While the health status of Aboriginal people has improved significantly in several respects over the past few decades, the Aboriginal population in B.C. continues to experience poorer health and a disproportionate rate of chronic diseases and injuries compared to other B.C. residents. VCH and the Federal and Provincial governments are working with First Nations, Métis and other partners to improve Aboriginal people's health and to close this gap in health status.

Strategic Initiatives of the VCH Service Plan

Goal: Improved Health and Wellness for VCH Residents

Goal: High Quality Patient Care - Measurably improved health status for our populations; including specialized populations (e.g., Mental Health & Addictions, Aboriginal, Downtown Eastside). Focus on quality of care and patient safety to improve health outcomes. Study and design patient flow and service configuration to better match future service demand and supply requirements.

Goal: A Sustainable, Affordable, Publicly Funded Health System. Retain staff and physician complements by maintaining quality of work life indicators and cooperative and collaborative working relationships with physician groups and health sector unions.

Goal: Innovate and improve Electronic Health record technology; support self-managing care; implement & upgrade systems to enable accurate, quick, and responsive, collaborative sharing of information in the interests of the patient/client.

7.2.5 Whistler Community Services Society (WCSS)

Whistler Community Services Society's (WCSS) vision remains to be the prominent social service resource in Whistler by responding to the changing needs of a diverse Whistler Community. As such, WCSS has worked diligently with their dedicated staff and board of directors on an agency wide strategy to guide us into the next 5 years. WCSS endeavours to meet the needs of its community members by offering programs on a flexible platform; something the agency has been proud of during its 22 year history in Whistler. By working collaboratively with groups such as the Whistler Centre for Sustainability, The Mature Action Committee, School District #48, The Chamber of Commerce and many of the communities employers, WCSS will attempt to meet the needs as they emerge before us. WCSS endeavours to expand its enterprising non-profit model beyond the very successful Re-Use-It Centre by opening a successful Re-Build-It Centre which will allow for the growth of programs with a decreasing dependence on outside funding. This innovation will allow WCSS to continue to support social sustainability in Whistler by providing programs and services that improve the ability of Whistler community members to meet their needs and enhance their lives.

7.2.6 RMOW Accessibility

Whistler was selected as a pilot community in the provincial government's Measuring Up program, an initiative of 2010 Legacies Now, which provides funding and resources to help BC communities assess and improve how accessible and inclusive they are for people with disabilities and for the whole community.

Whistler has used its grant to hire a coordinator to support Whistler's continued Measuring Up community assessment process with particular focus on universal design, infrastructure improvements, community inclusion, and accessible tourism. The Measuring Up coordinator works to implement accessibility actions recommended by Whistler2020 community task forces and tell Whistler's accessibility story to the world during the 2010 Winter Games.

The Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) Council formed the Measuring Up Select Committee of Council, whose mandate will be to improve Whistler's accessibility and inclusion. The committee reviews accessibility issues that stretch into every access of community life from inclusive hiring practices to the built environment.

Other initiatives being pursued include wayfinding improvements for persons with visual and hearing disabilities, testing new standards for accessible sidewalks and improving our development standards and review procedures.

Also, the municipality is part of an accessible tourism initiative that involves Tourism Whistler, Tourism B.C., Tourism Vancouver, the City of Vancouver and Legacies Now in a program to provide travelers with rankings of accessible hotels and other tourism properties.

The investments in physical change, signage and better wayfinding information are currently being funded through the RMOW's Village Enhancement fund, which is derived from hotel tax revenue.

NEXT STEPS

The Quality of Life 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 this program and more fully reflect the interests of the residents of Whistler.



THE RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

Host Mountain Resort
2010 Olympic and Paralympic
Winter Games

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