

ECONOMIC VIABILITY BACKGROUND REPORT

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

The Resort Municipality of Whistler | January 2011

THE PREMIER MOUNTAIN RESORT COMMUNITY
MOVING TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



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INTRODUCTION

There have been numerous assessments of resort community performance in Canada over the years, and which tools and policies are necessary to improve success. In 2002, the Canada West Foundation wrote:

“Municipalities across Canada face a financial squeeze as they attempt to fund basic services and cope with the demands of growth while having to rely upon property taxes as their primary source of taxation revenue (*Vander Ploeg 2001, 2002*). This squeeze is particularly acute for rapidly growing resort communities where the property tax fails to generate revenue from a large number of short-term visitors. As a consequence, the support services for a much larger and seasonally-variable transient population.

This problem is further compounded by increased global competition among resort communities. Canadian resort communities will be placed at a disadvantage if they rely on a less favourable revenue base than do their international competitors. Skiers, for example, may come to a particular destination primarily because of the slope and snow conditions, but in making their choice among scores of alternatives they are not indifferent to the amenities offered by the host community.

Vision

Whistler Village is bustling with stable year-round visitor numbers while local businesses flourish and generate sustainable livelihoods for residents.

Tourism remains the primary driver for Whistler's economic success along with a healthy diversified marketplace that provides goods and services to local residents and businesses.

Whistler was designed specifically as a destination resort and the community continues to build on that foundation. Whistler continues to successfully expand into ventures that complement tourism, increasing Whistler's attractiveness as a destination resort.

Whistler is resilient. The resort's success is based on its ability to promote meaningful and vibrant experiences and offerings. There are a variety of reasons to visit Whistler year-round; from numerous festivals, events and arts and cultural activities to corporate conferences, spa and wellness retreats and recreational activities.

Whistler's ongoing success and resilience is due in part to its ability to adapt and track external trends such as emerging resorts, globalization, upward pressures on energy and transportation prices, as well as growing competition.

The visitor experience in Whistler sets the resort apart from other places in North America and ensures its success as a world-class resort community. Sound community planning and community investments in major, world-class municipal facilities, works and services continue to be an important factor in terms of maintaining this "experience."

To ensure costs of maintaining infrastructure to the standards of an international destination resort is adequately provided for and shared equitably among visitors and residents, the RMOW uses a pay-as-you-go approach for services such as recreation, parking and utilities.

In using a pay-as-you-go system, municipal revenues are placed in capital reserve funds over time. Money from these accounts help pay for infrastructure projects, protecting the municipality from high debt levels and associated borrowing costs. Thanks to successful and strategic lobbying, Whistler has been given access to new revenue sources and revenue-generating tools similar to the hotel tax.

While other resorts struggle with affordability challenges, Whistler continues to support affordability options for residents who've chosen to live in Whistler while keeping within Whistler's planned ecological and social limits.

Locally owned and operated businesses help provide economic diversification and are key to Whistler's success. These businesses foster economic health and provide authentic and unique tourism experiences.

BACKGROUND

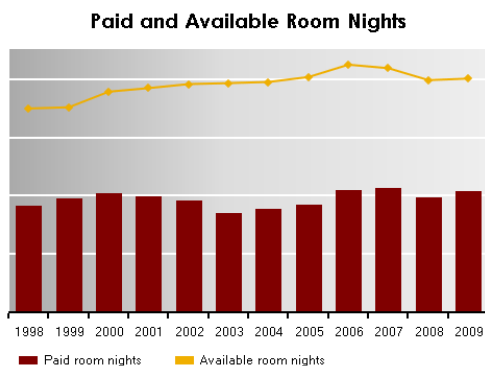
New financial realities define the financial framework within which the municipality must work and continue to succeed in coming years.

Growth Cap

As a community, Whistler has determined that it must limit the overall amount of development that is allowed to occur. To that end, Whistler has introduced a maximum size – growth cap – of 61,750 bed units. Expansion beyond this size would undermine Whistler's efforts toward sustainability, and would compromise the unique resort experience that Whistler has worked hard to develop. New growth in 2009 and years beyond will be limited to redevelopment projects, and will almost certainly fall below the 2008 figure in terms of value. In this environment, RMOW cannot rely on revenues from new growth to pay increasing costs. Whistler, put bluntly, will not be able to grow its way out of financial challenges.

Revenue Uncertainty

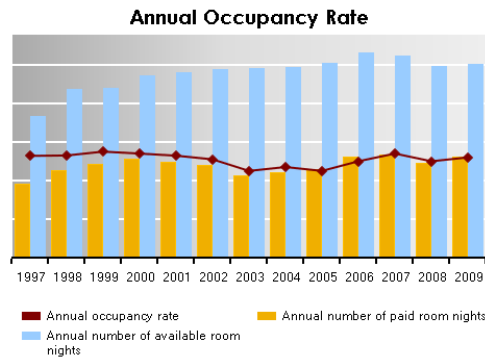
As the local government of a single-industry centre dependent on tourism, RMOW faces an inherent degree of revenue uncertainty that is greater than that faced by municipal governments in centres with more diverse local economies. Whistler also, however, faces other sources of uncertainty related specifically to its hotel room tax revenues, and the portion of its property taxes paid by strata hotels that are assessed as residential use and are subject lower Class 1 residential rates than their counterpart Class 6 commercial properties. Tax classification of these properties changes daily, depending on whether the property is rented. A room that is rented pays commercial rates of tax. One that is available but unrented pays residential rates.



One key factor in Whistler's economic picture is the different tax classification of visitor rooms that are paid or available, particularly when occupancy rates average out around 55 per cent. Source: Whistler2020 Explorer.

Hotel Occupancy

Whistler's prosperity is dependent on attracting visitors to the resort. All visitors purchase goods and services when they visit the resort; as such, all visitors are important to the resort community. Unquestionably, however, visitors who overnight in Whistler's hotels have a far greater positive impact on the local economy than those who visit for the day. Occupancy rates in Whistler's hotel sector, therefore, are an important indicator of the community's economic strength.

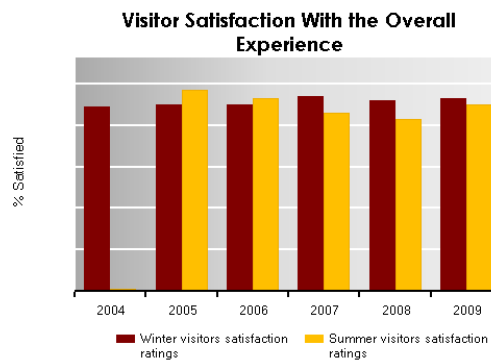


Source: Whistler2020 Explorer

Resort Community Competition

As a destination resort community, Whistler competes for visitors with a wide range of places and attractions. Other top-end ski resorts such as Vail, Park City and Banff are competitors of Whistler, but so too are entertainment centres such as Las Vegas, theme parks such as Disneyland, beach and golf resorts in the southern U.S. and Mexico, and cruise ships.

In the face of uncertainties, what Whistler can do as a community is to remain steadfast in its commitment to, and promotion of, the Whistler Experience – the set of unique qualities that makes Whistler appealing as a place to visit, play, and live. This experience is what sets Whistler apart from other places and helps to ensure its ongoing success as a world-class resort community.



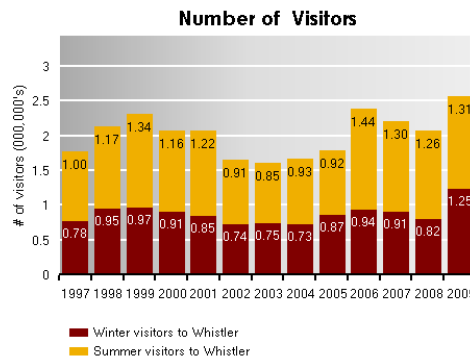
Source: Whistler2020 Explorer

It is the community, of course, that pays for the bulk of the high quality infrastructure and services that RMOW provides. Flagging community support – particularly from the business community – for such investments would also jeopardize the Whistler Experience and, ultimately, the resort's success.

CURRENT REALITY

Designed as a destination resort community centered around a pedestrian friendly village and at the foot of two world-class mountains, Whistler's economy is largely based on tourism. Whistler receives approximately 2.1 million overnight and non-overnight visitors each year (approximately 48 per cent in winter and 52 per cent in summer).

Whistler holds a competitive position within the international resort destination market and the community's ongoing prosperity is dependent on attracting visitors to the resort. As a resort community, Whistler competes for visitors with a wide range of places and destinations.



Source: Whistler2020 Explorer

As a local government of a resort destination dependent on tourism, the RMOW faces an inherent degree of revenue uncertainty that is greater than faced by municipalities with more diverse local economies. While the economic success of the resort has always been an important priority to the municipality, previously the majority of municipal revenues were assessment-based. Now municipal revenues are more tied to visitors than ever before.

Recently, Whistler effectively reached its bed cap with most properties within municipal boundaries now developed. This growth has been planned and managed through a bed cap of 61,750 bed units¹, limiting the overall amount of development that is allowed to occur.

In the past, when cost increases occurred or new services were needed, there was new growth to cushion the impact to existing taxpayers. With this in mind, the municipality undertook a rewrite of its Long Term Financial Plan, which serves as a blueprint for future council and staff and guides decision-making.

¹ The bed unit concept was established by the RMOW at the time of incorporation in 1975 and is/was used as a tool to track Whistler's development and infrastructure capacity and as a point of reference and benchmark for future growth management. The current OCP (1993) contained a bed cap of 52,500. The current total reflects council and community directed increases in support of expanded affordable resident housing contained in a 1996 Council Resolution and the adoption of Whistler2020 in 2005.

The RMOW has also adopted a pay-as-you-go philosophy as a general policy. Pay-as-you-go means that the municipality builds reserves to pay for capital projects, instead of incurring debt.

Whistler has also been given an unprecedented opportunity after hosting the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The 2010 Games saw the completion of many legacy items, including the Whistler Athletes Village. The Whistler Olympic Park and the Whistler Sliding Centre, both official competition venues for the 2010 Winter Games, now provide yet another attraction for visitors as well as a major draw for athletes in training.

A number of different factors are influencing Whistler's tourism economy, but Whistler is resilient as Whistler builds on its foundation as a world class resort moving toward sustainability.

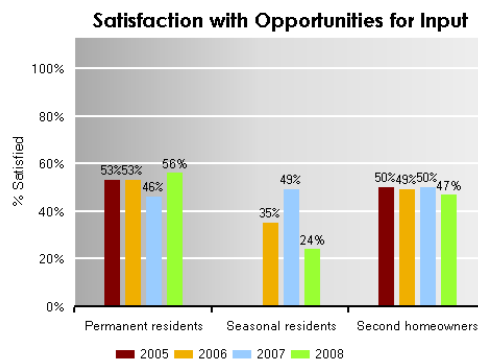
CURRENT PRINCIPLES

Principles

RMOW's financial principles, identified here, are broad statements that speak to the values, beliefs and philosophy of the organization. The principles set a framework for financial decision-making, and serve as a platform for the more specific financial policies.

Nine principles are outlined, including:

- » **Whistler2020**
- » **Whistler Experience**
- » **Financial Prudence & Responsibility**
- » **Efficient & Effective Government**
- » **Fairness & Equity**
- » **Building Community**
- » **Innovation**
- » **Leadership**
- » **Openness & Transparency**



Source: Whistler2020 Explorer

Whistler 2020

RMOW's financial policies and decisions will support and promote Whistler2020.

Whistler2020: Moving Toward a Sustainable Future is the ambitious, long-term plan that commits Whistler to pursuing its vision of resort community excellence in a way that promotes sustainability. Whistler2020 was created by the community to reflect the community's values, and to direct the community's actions. All decisions taken by RMOW and its partners are guided by Whistler2020. All policies developed by the municipality – including the financial policies put forward in this document – are informed by the Whistler2020 vision and community priorities.

The Whistler Experience

RMOW will make the necessary investments in services and facilities required to maintain the Whistler Experience, and commitments to integrated and responsible land use decisions.

As a destination resort, Whistler's continued prosperity is dependent on the community's ability to attract visitors. Whistler has benefitted tremendously, in this regard, from provincial investments in the Sea-to-Sky Highway and in facilities related to the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. Whistler has also benefitted from Whistler-Blackcomb's recently completed Peak-2-Peak Gondola. Continuous attention and additional investment from all public and private sector interests, however, is needed to ensure ongoing success. All sectors of the local economy must work together to provide the high-quality, unique experience – the Whistler Experience – that helps to set Whistler apart from its competition. RMOW understands this reality and the important role that the municipality must play in the broader undertaking. RMOW understands, in particular, its need to provide, in collaboration with its partners, world-class services and facilities.

To be sure, every effort must be made to provide appropriate services and facilities in the most cost-effective manner possible. Visitors to Whistler, however, expect high-quality and extensive services and facilities, as do residents and businesses in the community. The municipality, with its partners, must meet or exceed those expectations.

Commitment to the Whistler Experience cannot be allowed to wane during the current global economic crisis. Decisions on the part of RMOW and/or its partners to scale-back investments in infrastructure, facilities and services or to stray from the carefully considered planning principles will serve only to undermine Whistler's competitiveness. Failure to remain competitive will, in turn, create a downward spiral effect: fewer visitors to the resort will lead to a decline in prosperity, which will result in even fewer visitors, which will cause a deeper decline in prosperity, and so on.

Financial Prudence & Responsibility

RMOW will take the financial measures necessary to provide for Whistler's needs.

Whistler is a financially prudent and responsible resort community. All partners are committed to ensuring that adequate resources are in place to fund the services and infrastructure demanded by residents, businesses and visitors to the resort. RMOW embodies this commitment, and does not shy away from measures that are required to support necessary investments in municipal infrastructure and services. RMOW does not defer necessary expenditures, and does not allow liabilities to go unfunded. RMOW deals head-on with financial challenges facing the community. It does not leave them for future generations to tackle.

Efficient & Effective Government

RMOW is committed to cost-effective and efficient service delivery, and to providing services that are valued by stakeholders.

RMOW's culture emphasizes the importance of providing exceptional value for money to local taxpayers. In the years ahead, RMOW will remain committed to this ethos. The municipality will provide services that are valued by stakeholders, and that are delivered in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Fairness & Equity

Those who benefit from municipal services contribute to the cost of providing such services. Those who benefit, directly and indirectly, from municipal services and facilities should contribute towards the cost of providing the services and facilities. The total cost burden should be shared by all groups of beneficiaries – permanent residents, second-home owners, visitors to the resort, the business sector – in a fair and balanced way using property taxes, hotel room taxes, user fees and charges, and other forms of funding.

Whistler is a world-class destination resort community. Considerable municipal investment is required on an on-going basis to provide the local services, amenities and facilities required to support the resort, vision and priorities in Whistler2020, and the commitment to the Whistler Experience. All groups benefit from the municipality's investment in the community. All groups should help to shoulder the costs.

Building Community

Whistler is a community as well as resort.

Steps taken to promote Whistler and enhance its status as a world-class destination resort are clearly important. Equally important, however, are ongoing efforts aimed at enriching Whistler as a community. A vibrant community is an integral part of the Whistler Experience. A strong, confident local community adds to Whistler's unique appeal, both for residents and visitors as they interact and integrate on the mountains and in the village.

RMOW and its partners have worked hard to promote citizen engagement and foster a sense of civic pride in the community. RMOW and its partners have also invested considerable resources to create the economic, housing, recreation and cultural opportunities needed to attract a wide range of age groups and household types to Whistler. Challenges exist to be sure – the prevalence of service-sector jobs with limited earning potential makes it difficult for some families, seniors and others to make Whistler home. RMOW is committed, though, to working with its partners to identify and pursue new initiatives aimed at overcoming these challenges.

Innovation

RMOW will develop innovative approaches to service provision and revenue generation in order to meet its future financial challenges.

RMOW has a proven track record of innovative resort governance and service provision. On matters of housing, land use, community planning, sustainability and economic development, RMOW and its partners have consistently demonstrated a capacity for leadership, imagination and resourcefulness.

In the coming years, as Whistler faces new financial challenges and increased competition, this spirit of innovation will be more important than ever. RMOW will need to apply its creativity to develop new approaches to service and infrastructure provision, and to secure new sources of municipal revenue.

New sources of revenue will be particularly important to help Whistler make the investments needed to promote the Whistler Experience. Securing new sources, however, will be difficult. The provincial legislation that governs RMOW and its activities does not give the municipality access to the revenue sources or revenue-generating tools enjoyed by resort communities in other jurisdictions. Whistler was successful in recent years in negotiating a larger share of the provincial hotel room tax revenues.

But appeals to further diversify the community's set of revenue sources and its revenue base were rejected. Despite past setbacks, RMOW will continue to press its case for additional revenue powers.

Leadership

RMOW's leaders will rely on financial policies and their own judgment to choose the best courses of action available under prevailing circumstances.

Effective municipal governments make decisions carefully and rely on well-considered policies when determining the most appropriate courses of action to take at any given time. Effective municipal governments also, however, get things done. They recognize that changing circumstances, time constraints and the lack of a "perfect" option may require decision-makers to take measures that might not be contemplated under different conditions. Effective municipal governments are pragmatic and flexible in their approaches to solving problems.

Openness & Transparency

All partners in the community will have the opportunity to understand trade-offs inherent in financial decisions, and rationales behind choices made.

In the coming years, decision-makers at RMOW will need to make tough decisions to address the financial challenges anticipated for the organization. Every decision will involve trade-offs. A decision, for example, to limit the tax burden of one group will result in an increase to the burden imposed on other groups.

Responsible leaders do not avoid making the tough financial decisions that must be made in order to address significant challenges. Responsible leaders also ensure that such decisions are made in an open and transparent way so that all stakeholders have the opportunity to understand the trade-offs involved, and the rationales for the choices made. Communication with stakeholders throughout the decision-making process is important.

The Resort Municipality of Whistler is committed to openness and transparency in its decision-making processes, including those that deal with financial matters. Communication with stakeholders will be emphasized so that everyone can be made aware of the trade-offs inherent in tough decisions, and the rationales behind chosen courses of action.

CURRENT POLICIES

Current OCP

The economic base of Whistler is dominated by tourism and the provision of goods and services to local residents and local businesses. Continued expansion of tourism is the community's best prospect for job creation, but there are advantages to trying to diversify the economy; diversification provides more stability in times of economic uncertainty and also provides a wider array of job prospects for people who choose to make Whistler their home. On the other hand, too much economic expansion can put even more pressure on the environment and more pressure on the housing market.

Policies

1. The municipality supports and encourages efforts to continue expanding tourism particularly in ways that make better use of existing facilities in non-peak times and that allow Whistler to draw new markets. The municipality will encourage:

- » Efficient & Effective Government.
- » Use of aquatic and arena facilities for events that will attract visitors, provided that the highest priority is placed on meeting community recreational needs.
- » The provision of more cultural and arts related events and programs, particularly in non-peak times and the provision of more education programs that make use of conference facilities in Whistler. The municipality will continue to encourage major annual events such as the Whistler Symposium.
- » Increasing outdoor recreation opportunities, particularly outside the ski season.
- » Of course the municipality also supports continued efforts to maintain and increase Whistler's position and market share in the domestic and international mountain resort market.

2. The municipality will support the diversification of the local economy by:

- » Considering the designation of lands for possible light industrial and business park use, to provide sites for businesses that serve the community and to provide sites for appropriate business that serve the community and to provide sites for appropriate businesses that can broaden the economic base (such as high tech firms and/or firms that are closely related to outdoor recreation). However, land use policy will continue to only allow businesses that are not detrimental to the resort. Commercial and industrial uses will be concentrated in a few areas, will be carefully regulated to ensure they are reasonably sized, and will not be allowed to spread out along the highway.
- » Encourage the establishment and growth of educational institutions;
- » Anticipating better communication linkages to Whistler and the likelihood that communications and computer technology will allow people to live in Whistler and work in their homes; this trend will require that care will be taken in the regulation of home-based businesses.

3. The municipality will continue to cooperate with the Chamber of Commerce, the Sea to Sky Economic Development Commission, the Whistler Centre for Business and the Arts, and the Whistler Resort Association to define the most appropriate role for the municipality in the areas of resort marketing, business recruitment and economic development initiatives.

4. The municipality will continue to seek the cooperation of the provincial government in ensuring that the plans and activities of all government agencies take into consideration any possible impacts on the resort.

5. Under the Resort Municipality of Whistler Act. Properties may be designated as “resort lands” and thereby required to pay dues to the Whistler Resort Association. The designation of resort lands will be reviewed and updated to ensure that all (and only) appropriate properties are so designated.

Long Term Financial Plan

1. INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING

1.1 The cornerstone of RMOW's infrastructure financing strategy will be a pay-as-you-go (PAYG) approach. RMOW will fund the bulk of its future infrastructure needs on a PAYG basis, using accumulated capital reserve funds.

- » Each year, a portion of the municipality's revenues will be placed into capital reserves. Monies will be withdrawn from these reserves, rather than borrowed, to pay for infrastructure projects on a pay-as-you-go basis. This approach will protect the municipality from high debt levels and associated borrowing costs. It will also provide for a stable approach to municipal taxation by limiting the need for sharp increases to fund expenditures in any one year.

1.2 RMOW will ensure that contributions to infrastructure replacement reserves take into account the actual, present-day cost of replacing existing works. This new policy will ensure that the annual contributions will continue, but at levels that are sufficient to cover future expenditures.

1.3 RMOW will provide some funding each year for new projects to enable decision-makers to make ongoing, pay-as-you-go capital investments aimed at enhancing the resort community's offerings, and its appeal to visitors.

- » Whistler's continued prosperity as a destination resort is dependent on its ability to attract visitors. Whistler's ability to attract visitors is, in turn, dependent on its ability to provide a unique, high-quality experience — the Whistler Experience — that meets or exceeds the experiences available at other recreation and leisure destinations.
- » The community's investments in major, world class municipal facilities, works and services constitute an important component of the Whistler Experience. Also important, however, are the ongoing capital investments in amenities and facilities undertaken to enhance and “keep fresh” the resort community's image and offerings, and its' appeal to visitors.

1.4 In its approach to funding municipal infrastructure, RMOW will pursue and maximize available senior government contributions.

- » RMOW is committed to building infrastructure reserves that are sufficient to fully fund replacement works, and to pay for at least a portion of new projects. Monies in reserve that, because of senior government contributions, are not needed for a specific project will be made available for other capital works.

1.5 Where necessary, RMOW will borrow to finance new infrastructure projects.

- » RMOW will borrow funds in cases where capital reserves for a new project are not sufficient, and where the timing of the proposed project cannot be deferred. In these cases, the specific project and its annual payments (principal and interest) will be itemized for taxpayers in RMOW's budget materials.
- » On a case-by-case basis, RMOW will consider public-private partnerships in place of conventional debt financing.

Cost Revenue Gap

2.1 RMOW will continue to strive for efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the delivery of services. In past years, RMOW has demonstrated its commitment to providing services in cost-effective ways. In future years, RMOW will continue to seek efficiencies in all parts of its operations, and will continue to explore and implement innovative approaches designed to save taxpayers' money.

2.2 RMOW will examine service levels in an effort to close the forecasted gap between costs and revenues. RMOW will not, however, undermine its ability to provide the municipal investment required to support the Whistler Experience, or to support the community's priorities as set out in Whistler2020. Such measures would jeopardize the Whistler Experience on which the community's success is based. Such measures would, in short, represent false economies.

- » Local service levels in Whistler are higher than in many other communities in the province. Whistler's levels are comparable, however, to those in other destination resort communities around North America. It is these places, and not other BC municipalities, with which Whistler must compete.
- » Failure to be competitive will result in fewer visitors to Whistler; and fewer visitors will lead to a decline in the community's prosperity.

2.3 RMOW will regularly review current and potential fees and charges in an effort to raise additional monies, and to minimize the need for property tax increases.

- » RMOW levies fees and charges for several of the services it provides, including regulatory services. There may be opportunities for the municipality to generate a higher total amount from these sources than at present (total revenues from fees & charges in 2008 were close to \$17 million, or 21% of all revenues).

2.4 RMOW will continue to press for access to new revenue sources and revenue-generating tools in an effort to diversify the municipality's revenue base, and to reduce its long-term dependence on property tax revenues.

- » Hotel room tax revenues notwithstanding, RMOW continues to lack access to many of the revenue sources and revenue-generating tools that are available to resort communities in other jurisdictions. In past discussions with the provincial government, new sources and tools have been raised and examined, but not endorsed.
- » RMOW will also expand other potential revenue opportunities for which it already has authority.

Property Taxes

3.1 Relying on further development to overcome financial pressures is no longer an option. Failure to introduce appropriate changes to live within our means will create even greater pressures in the future, and make it more difficult for the community to meet its objectives.

3.2 RMOW will examine its options for enhancing affordability programs for resident homeowners. RMOW wishes to provide additional financial assistance to households that have chosen to make Whistler their community.

3.3 RMOW will not use tax ratios as the basis for setting future tax rates for different property classes. RMOW's goal is to share the property tax burden between the key property classes in a way that is considered fair and balanced.

Revenue Uncertainty

4.1 RMOW will establish a Revenue Stabilization Fund to mitigate the uncertainty in municipal revenues related to hotel room taxes and property taxes paid on strata hotel units.

- » As the local government of a single-industry centre dependent on tourism, RMOW faces an inherent degree of revenue uncertainty that is greater than that faced by local governments of communities with more diverse local economies.

4.2 RMOW will work with the province, Tourism Whistler and others to ensure that hotel room taxes are paid on all units rented to visitors.

- » All units rented on a nightly basis to visitors are subject to the provincial hotel room tax, a portion of which is transferred to RMOW under the terms of its revenue-sharing agreements with the province.

Private Investment in Overnight Properties

5.1 RMOW will support new models of private investment in overnight properties in cases where the municipality is confident that the use of such models will not risk undermining the Whistler Experience.

- » As a destination resort, Whistler competes with a wide range of places and attractions. To compete successfully, Whistler must stand out and provide its unique Whistler Experience to visitors. The resort's world-class mountains, year-round amenities and public investments are important elements of the Experience. Also important, however, are the presence of branded overnight properties, and a commitment to high levels of customer service.

Economic Diversification

6.1 RMOW will expand tourism with more cultural, arts, entertainment events, particularly during shoulder seasons.

6.2 RMOW will:

Implementation Actions

- » RMOW will explore all available external sources of funding (e.g., senior government grants) to meet its capital obligations. External sources, however, cannot be expected to significantly lower the amount that the municipality itself will be required to fund using its own resources in future years. Increased contributions to reserves will be needed to cover anticipated expenditures. Relying on these reserves to pay for the bulk of infrastructure needs on a PAYG basis will be RMOW's preferred strategy.
- » In keeping with its principle of financial prudence and responsibility, RMOW will provide for its assets on a replacement-cost basis, and not on an historical-cost basis. RMOW will make annual contributions to infrastructure replacement reserves to pay for replacement works.
- » Senior government capital contributions to municipal infrastructure help to lower the cost of projects to local taxpayers. For this reason, RMOW will pursue and attempt to maximize senior government contributions in future years. RMOW will only pursue contributions, however, that support the community's priorities. In cases where conditions attached to the grants are at odds with Whistler's priorities, funds will not be pursued.
- » Where possible, cuts to programs, staffing numbers and other costs will be made. RMOW will not, however, significantly reduce key service levels in an effort to find cost savings.
- » Efforts to examine fee levels, fee structures, the application of fees, and the enhanced enforcement of unpaid charges will be undertaken to identify the potential for higher returns.

- » Through UBCM and FCM, and in cooperation with other municipalities, RMOW will support appeals to other levels of government for additional revenue sources and authorities.
- » Whistler is constrained in its ability to act by the rules set out in provincial legislation. RMOW will work with the province to secure the proper authority and support for any initiatives.
- » From this point forward, RMOW will allocate the municipal property tax burden, including increases to the burden, in a fair and balanced way. Consideration will be given to demonstrate best practices, such as those followed by the provincial government. Tax rate ratios will no longer be used as the basis for determining rates.
- » To promote inter-property equity, and to make sure that the community receives the monies to which it is entitled, RMOW will work with the province, Tourism Whistler and others to do what is necessary to enforce the rules that require all operators to collect hotel room taxes.
- » RMOW recognizes that there is a demand for multi-owner property investments, such as hotel conversions. The municipality cannot, however, allow conversions that risk undermining the RMOW's revenues, the level of guest service in the resort, the ongoing need to refurbish and reinvest in properties, and the revenue needs of Tourism Whistler. RMOW has begun to explore its ability to address these concerns through regulation. Until RMOW is satisfied that regulation, or some alternative measure, can provide the required protection, RMOW will not approve further requests for conversion.

MONITORING & INDICATORS

To track our performance toward, or away from our OCP policy directions, a number of indicators are monitored on an annual basis under the Whistler 2020 monitoring and reporting program. The related indicators can be viewed on the Whistler 2020 Explorer at www.whistler2020.ca.

NEXT STEPS

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



THE RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

Host Mountain Resort
2010 Olympic and Paralympic
Winter Games

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