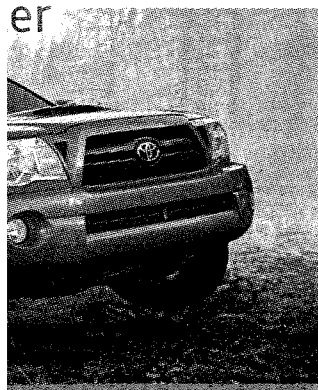


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Whistler's Official Community Plan update: invitation to converse

by Claire Daniels

Chris Corrigan, Bowen Island-based Open Space facilitator, says the fundamental human capacities of this era are also the most ancient: invitation and conversation.

The Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) has an invitation to converse with you, the people that make this place, through the ongoing update of our Official Community Plan. On May 26, Whistlerites were invited to converse about issues that matter in our community. *Après in Action* was designed to inspire, inform and allow input into the OCP update. Around 130 community members attended, and, as the OCP update launch event, the format of the evening was discussion-based and aimed at listening to the community.

The OCP doesn't replace Whistler2020 — our shared vision, priorities and a process to get there — the two documents work together. Whistler2020 is Whistler's highest-level policy and guide for the OCP update. The OCP provides the regulatory framework and is one of the tools for implementing Whistler2020 and formally protecting Whistler's vision. In other words, Whistler2020 provides the "rules of the game" or design instructions, while the OCP is the manifestation of our community vision, transforming our vision into actions.

At *Après in Action*, a main issue identified at the Quality of Life table had to do with seniors and their involvement/inclusion within the community. How do we keep our older population? What are the circumstances forcing people to leave who don't want to? The issues that arose were all identified as part of Whistler becoming a mature community.

Economic challenges were also discussed. The importance of succession to

keep small businesses in the community, as well as the importance of such small businesses to Whistler's quality of life was identified. More multi-generational interaction was suggested to enhance quality of life within Whistler, with the Olympics being given as a positive example of this.

Neighbourhood issues included garbage and lack of accessibility, lack of community interaction and increasing neighbourhood shared-space to address this, and non-motorized linkages and the importance of encouraging and enhancing such linkages within the community.

According to Eric Vogt, author of *The Art of Powerful Questions*, the usefulness of the knowledge we acquire and the effectiveness of the actions we take depend on the quality of the questions we ask. "Questions can lead to movement and action on key issues; by generating creative insights, they can ignite change." Yet, in our North American society, we often focus on having the "right answer" rather than discovering the "right question."

So what if you missed *Après in Action*? Don't worry: there will be many future invitations to engage in the OCP update. The OCP update is currently in Phase 3 of an over year-long process and opportunities for community engagement will only increase. Some events and initiatives to look forward to include: Backyard BBQ Brainstorms, Community Working Group Meeting and Community Workshops to fine tune the OCP update.

This OCP update is about asking questions to open the door to dialogue and discovery, and in so doing inviting creativity and breakthrough thinking.

So I ask the question, how can we protect, maintain and enhance what we love about Whistler? How can we work together to maintain the Whistler we know and love? ■

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