



THE RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

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July 29, 2011

Dear Property Owner:

Thank you for engaging in Whistler's Official Community Plan process. We are encouraged by the great number of citizens and property owners (including owner-direct accommodation providers) who have been involved in this process over the last many months. This letter is in response to several items of correspondence that we have recently received expressing concerns and raising questions about a number of the policies contained in the draft Official Community Plan (OCP). Many of these comments are based on the draft version of the OCP that is currently posted on the municipal OCP website (www.whistler2010.com) for feedback. Since posting the draft OCP on the website, there have been community working group meetings for each OCP chapter, Community Advisory Group meetings, consultations with Whistler Council, and public input on that version of the OCP. I have attached the updated drafts of the relevant chapters as a result of this most recent input. The following is an overview of the updated draft policies in the *Economic Viability and Land Use and Development: Residential & Visitor Accommodation* chapters that were referred to most frequently in many of the letters that we have received:

- In the *Land Use and Development: Residential & Visitor Accommodation* chapter, as with the *Economic Viability* chapter, the Description and Rationale sections following each policy have been removed and text boxes added to explain the intent of the Objectives.
- Several sections are included that recognize the importance of having a variety of accommodation types.
- In keeping with an overall desire that municipalities have to achieve tax equity.
- Objective 4.2 of the *Economic Viability* chapter states "Work to ensure all properties operating visitor accommodation are taxed equitably." The OCP does not propose changing the classification of properties that are currently classified as Class 1 to Commercial Class 6, and does not propose to change any allowed use or ownership model. Tax equity is a broad goal that we believe is supported by the vast majority of taxpayers.
- Concern was expressed that the OCP proposes to change zoning of accommodation. The draft OCP does not include policies to change zoning of accommodation. The draft OCP contains policy for future approval of applications to provide a diverse accommodation mix, and to review and establish policy for consideration to determine an appropriate mix of fractional ownership, timeshare, whole ownership, strata hotels, etc.
- Draft policy 4.2.4 of the *Residential & Visitor Accommodation* chapter entertains the possibility of repurposing poorly performing/located accommodation where appropriate and only when the alternate use is to the benefit of the resort community. Such consideration would only be given if requested by the landowner under the revised draft policy.



- Concern has also been expressed with a proposed centralized visitor check-in facility. The draft wording in the OCP states “investigate opportunities to enhance visitor accommodation guest services, including the creation” of such a facility. Our desire to look into this possibility is fuelled by the many comments that we have received and have been posted on various travel blogs regarding difficulty that visitors encounter checking in to properties. Nonetheless, there is no commitment to build such a facility, only investigate.
- Nothing in the Draft OCP makes any changes to Phase 1 covenants. Only a property owner can grant changes to covenants.
- Nothing in the Draft OCP creates an automatic amendment to our Business Regulation bylaw.
- And finally, Municipal Council is not seeking an amendment by the provincial government to the Resort Municipality of Whistler Act through these amendments to the OCP.

The full updated version of the OCP will be posted on www.whistler2010.com in the coming weeks. The OCP process has included extensive and valuable community involvement and input for more than one year and the final OCP draft will be before council for adoption this fall.

The OCP is a provincially-mandated policy document it includes land use designations that guide land use planning, social, economic, and environmental policies, and civic infrastructure investments. Whistler’s OCP was last comprehensively updated in 1993.

Please contact me at (mvince@whistler.ca) should you have any further questions about the policies in the OCP.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Vance".

Mike Vance
General Manager, Policies and Programs

Attachments



DRAFT Official Community Plan update
Economic Viability

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INTRODUCTION: A VISION OF OUR FUTURE

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 mix and performance of accommodation types in Whistler is monitored to main an effective mix for all visitor markets.

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. Community investments in major municipal facilities, works and services, operations, maintenance levels and events continue to be an important factor in terms of maintaining the "Whistler Experience."

To ensure costs of maintaining infrastructure to the standards of an international destination resort are shared equitably among visitors and residents, the RMOW uses a pay-as-you-go approach for services such as recreation, parking and utilities. Municipal revenues from the pay-as-you-go system are placed in capital reserve funds. Money from these accounts help pay for infrastructure projects, protecting the municipality from high debt levels and associated borrowing costs. As well, the Five Year Financial Plan provides the framework for efficient financial planning and investment consistent with the values and policies of the Official Community Plan.

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.

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 but much of Whistler's success is attributed to a unique visitor experience, which makes Whistler appealing as a place to visit, play and live.

As a local government of a resort destination dependent on tourism, the municipality 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.

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 units, 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.

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.

From time to time Whistler is called upon to approve/refuse the stratification of buildings. These decisions are based in part upon whether or not the stratification would support the objectives and policies of the Official Community Plan.

Many facilities in Whistler are not operating at optimum capacity, including the visitor accommodation, commercial and retail sectors, and numerous seasonal public and private facilities. Whistler's challenge is to increase visitation to Whistler and these facilities to increase their financial success and ability to reinvest. 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.

1. GOAL: WHISTLER WILL PROVIDE EFFECTIVE, APPROPRIATE MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT MINIMIZES TAXPAYER COSTS.

1.1. Objective: Ensure capital reserves are maintained at necessary levels for infrastructure construction or replacement.

OBJECTIVE TEXT BOX: The municipality plans for replacing components of its infrastructure each year. In our recent history, it has been our preference to support this by spending money that is already on-hand in our reserves. These reserves have been built-up over time to fund the replacement of existing infrastructure using a savings-approach rather than a borrowing approach. Reserve amounts are established to ensure that there is an ability to pay projected future costs, rather than basing reserves on historic costs.

OBJECTIVE TEXT BOX 2: Timely reinvestment in infrastructure, in part, recognizes Whistler's importance beyond Municipal boundaries; as such it is appropriate and prudent to seek cost-sharing from senior levels of government in some circumstances.

- 1.1.1. Policy: Ensure infrastructure financing through a savings approach and save for future infrastructure needs on an annual basis, using accumulated capital reserve funds.
- 1.1.2. Policy: Ensure that contributions to infrastructure replacement reserves take into account the actual cost of replacing existing works, not historical cost.
- 1.1.3. Policy: Pursue and maximize available senior government contributions in funding municipal infrastructure.

1.1.4. Policy: Where required and/or prudent, consider borrowing to finance infrastructure projects.

1.2.Objective: Ensure the quality of experience for our visitors and residents is maintained to continue to offer a superior experience for residents and visitors, while maintaining our competitive position.

1.2.1. Policy: Utilize a framework to rationalize and prioritize capital investments aimed at enhancing the resort community and its appeal to visitors and residents (The Whistler Experience).

2. GOAL: IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE RMOW FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN.

2.1.Objective: Ensure alignment between the existing Long-Term Financial Plan, Five-Year Financial Plan and the Official Community Plan.

2.1.1. Policy: The Five Year Financial Plan will provide the framework for efficient financial planning and investment consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the OCP.

2.1.2. Policy: Review economic indicators on an ongoing basis to gauge the economic viability of the community to ensure that performance is aligned with our vision.

3. GOAL: REDUCE RELIANCE ON PROPERTY TAXES.

3.1.1. Policy: Identify alternative revenue streams through allowing development for industries that are compatible with tourism and maximize user fees.

3.1.2. Policy: Prioritize a philosophy of entrepreneurship across the entire RMOW organization while delivering affordable service excellence.

4. GOAL: MINIMIZE REVENUE UNCERTAINTY.

4.1.Objective: Implement new tools and procedures to minimize revenue loss.

4.2 Objective: Work to ensure all properties operating visitor accommodation are taxed equitably.

5. GOAL: MAINTAIN A BALANCE OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION TYPES TO EFFECTIVELY REACH THE RANGE OF VISITOR MARKETS.

5.1.Objective: Continue to monitor the mix and performance of accommodation types in Whistler.

5.1.1. Policy: Identify alternate ownership types and covenantal restrictions for nightly accommodation in cases where the RMOW is confident the overall amount and mix of such ownership types in the resort community supports the success of the resort community and enhance the Whistler Experience.

6. GOAL: SUPPORT ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION WITHIN THE TOURISM ECONOMY.

6.1.Objective: Increase tourism visitation to support the accommodation and commercial sectors.

6.1.1. Policy: Support increased key cultural, arts, entertainment, events and sport tourism opportunities that diversify our tourism-based economy to increase resort community visitation and enrich the Whistler experience for all.

6.1.2. Policy: Investigate and support diversification opportunities through an enhanced learning sector that will diversify our tourism economy.

6.1.3. Policy: Work with resort stake-holders to pursue various opportunities where appropriate, and complementary to our existing infrastructure to diversify our economy.

- 6.1.4. Policy: Support off-site experiences and/or virtual tourism that provide sustainable growth in tourism and complementary revenue sources.
- 6.1.5. Policy: Support and encourage shoulder season tourism development opportunities such as recreation, arts events and festivals that use existing infrastructure.
- 6.1.6. Policy: Develop and support strategies and technologies that reduce energy consumption and emissions by focusing on local sourcing, waste reduction, energy and land conservation and low carbon emissions that connect sustainability to our tourism economy.
- 6.1.7. Policy: Provide leadership in sustainability and a progressively sustainable tourism-based economy.
- 6.1.8. Policy: Support the development and implementation of a comprehensive Sport Tourism Strategy by Tourism Whistler.

7. GOAL: SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS.

7.1. Objective: A vibrant and successful local business community.

- 7.1.1. Policy: Support new and existing businesses utilizing local Whistler skills and expertise that improve the Whistler Experience.

7.2. Objective: RMOW will strive to support local business through effective land use and supporting programs.

- 7.2.1. Policy: Support and encourage the development and/or acquisition of commercial real estate to support community-based business start-up and incubation that has the potential to bring “Whistler Character” back into the retail mix.

8. GOAL: WHISTLER LAND USES ARE EFFICIENT, APPROPRIATE AND REVITALIZED.

8.1. Objective: Ensure that all properties and infrastructure provide optimum levels of service and are continually renewed.

- 8.1.1. Policy: Support repurposing, reusing and/or optimizing existing built space instead of constructing new buildings.
- 8.1.2. Policy: Consider rezoning or repurposing land and buildings, including Municipal lands, for lease or use by businesses and organizations that showcase business practices that are:
 - a) sustainable
 - b) financially viable
 - c) community supporting
 - d) community development-oriented
 - e) enhance or protect the environment.
- 8.1.3. **Policy:** Review and update policies, procedures and processes to enhance service levels and guest experience to ensure alignment with our community’s vision and resort sector success.



DRAFT Official Community Plan update
Land Use and Development:
Residential & Visitor Accommodation

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RESIDENTIAL ACCOMODATION

INTRODUCTION: A VISION OF OUR FUTURE

Whistler's employees can enjoy life in Whistler because of a supply of resident restricted housing that was planned and built according to the needs of the community. Whistler's resident restricted housing supply includes a mix of residential housing types with a range of prices offering affordable options to both short-term and long-term employees.

Residents enjoy housing in mixed-use neighbourhoods that are intensive, vibrant and include a range of housing forms.

Community vibrancy is maintained by Whistler's healthy supply of resident restricted housing, which keeps 75% of employees living in the resort community. Over time, densities in certain areas have increased through multiple housing units, secondary suites, mixed use residential and commercial developments and well as innovative infill lot developments. Where possible, housing has been developed close to transit, pedestrian and bicycle routes, and amenities and services to reduce auto dependency.

Current Reality

A complete community provides its' residents with access to a full range of housing opportunities for; families, seniors, students and young persons, seasonal and permanent residents and for people at all income levels and life stages. This housing inventory also needs to be healthy and livable based on housing designs, construction and operation methods moving towards efficient energy and material use.

Whistler has committed to ensuring 75% of local employees living within the municipality, which is essential to maintaining a vibrant community. As a result, the Whistler Housing Authority (WHA), formed in October 1997, was created to oversee the development of resident restricted housing in Whistler through the use of the Employee Housing Fund. The WHA is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW). Whistler has approximately 2,000 units of resident-restricted housing (both rental and owner occupied units), which can only be occupied by qualified employees within the resort. Some of these units are supplied by third party and others form the inventory administered by the WHA.

In order to help provide a stock of resident restricted housing, the [Resort Municipality of Whistler Act](#) authorizes Whistler to impose and collect "works and services charges for municipal employee housing services".

2009 will be remembered as a milestone year for resident restricted housing in Whistler. Whistler is reaping the community benefit of 462 new resident restricted ownership and rental units that were occupied in 2009-2010 with these units being located in the Cheakamus Crossing and Rainbow neighbourhoods and at Fitzsimmons Walk.

Moving forward, while single family housing will remain the largest segment of housing in Whistler, densities in selected areas must increase in order to meet a variety of future housing needs (i.e. non-market units, special needs, aging in place needs) Density may be achieved through multiple unit housing; secondary suites under certain conditions, mixed use residential and commercial developments; conversion of existing residential properties for other residential purposes; and innovative infill lot developments.

The Municipality will encourage the development of a diversity of housing types and tenures as a means to ensure access to housing for all segments of Whistler's population.

Owing in part to its rapid evolution, from a rustic wilderness getaway to an internationally reputable four-season resort, Whistler is characterized by an eclectic mix of residential developments. In many neighbourhoods small chalets, cabins and condominiums built in the 1970s and 1980s remain alongside newer, larger and more significant dwellings in detached and multi-unit buildings. Other precincts are less diverse. The variation in building type reflects a range of residential uses. Whistler’s resort community context and local government housing affordability policies have created distinct markets shaping residential land use.

There are two principal markets that are the source of demand for housing in Whistler: the recreation market, and the local resident market. Given the limited supply of land for development and the large number of potential recreation home buyers, developers preferred to target the high end recreational market. Plus, land prices tend to preclude the private sector development of rental housing and the more affordable housing units for the local workforce. As a result, home ownership and quality rental accommodations are a challenge for the local resident market.

Ownership of market properties is a significant challenge for the vast majority of those employed in Whistler. As this challenge has emerged significantly in the last fifteen years, the RMOW has formed and controlled the Whistler Housing Authority (WHA) to assist with the delivery and management of resident restricted housing. At present there are more than 2000 resident-restricted units in Whistler that help to achieve the goal of 75% of Whistler Workers living in town.

The maturation of the resort has not come without growing pains for the commercial accommodation sector. Of serious concern are low occupancy levels that show a market challenge; and low “net promoter scores” that indicate declining levels of service.

1. GOAL: HOUSE AT LEAST 75% OF THE LOCAL WORKFORCE WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY.

1.1. Objective: Supply and maintain an inventory of Residential Restricted Housing in perpetuity, for both rental and ownership tenures, to be available for local income-earners and retireesⁱ.

OBJECTIVE 1.1 TEXT BOX: To attract and hold a stable work force, housing suitable for families and ownership supported by local incomes are needed. Recognizing the provision of sufficient housing types and diversity are good for the community and good for the resort, the Municipality adopted a Resident Housing Policy which encouraged and assisted several projects to deliver resident-restricted housing units exclusively for residents through the use of housing agreements.

- 1.1.1. Policy: Collaborate with Whistler Housing Authority (WHA) with respect to reviewing and monitoring resident housing needs of the Municipality.
- 1.1.2. Policy: Establish the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood as the primary location for any new resident-restrictedⁱⁱ development.
- 1.1.3. Policy: Designate and maintain Residential Reserve lands as identified on Schedule “X” (Land Use Plan) for potential

resident restricted housing, as required to support Whistler’s future housing needs.

1.1.4. Policy: New developments, other than residential, must include resident-restricted units on or off-site, or, pay the cash contribution in accordance with municipal bylaws.

1.1.5. Policy: Encourage the development of additional Resident-Restricted Housing for seasonal workers, as required.

1.1.6. Policy: Encourage the development of a sufficient and appropriate supply of housing for families and children.

POLICY TEXT BOX: Whistler has approximately 2,000 units of resident-restricted housing (both rental and owner occupied units), which can only be occupied by qualified local workers and retirees within the resort. The Municipality working with the Whistler Housing Authority (WHA) continues to maintain and augment its inventory of resident-restricted housing, so that both rental and ownership accommodation are affordable for local income-earners and retirees, in perpetuity and contribute toward the goal of housing at least 75% of the local workforce within its boundaries. In spite of recent successes, it is recognized that there are still unmet housing needs in Whistler.

2. GOAL: PROMOTE DIVERSITY OF HOUSING FORMS, TENURES, RESIDENTIAL USES AND DENSITIES TO SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF THE RESORT COMMUNITY.

2.1.Objective: Encourage accessibility, flexibility and adaptability in residential land uses.

2.1.1. Policy: Encourage accessibility standards and best practices in residential neighbourhood and building design.

2.1.2. Policy: Consider the development of additional infill housingⁱⁱⁱ areas subject to infrastructure review and community consultation.

2.1.3. Policy: Support appropriate “Live/Work”^{iv} zoning regulations and flexible land use designations.

- 2.1.4. Policy: Encourage the development of seniors housing^v to address the needs of retiring workers and support aging in place with the changing demographics of the resort community.
- 2.1.5. Policy: Investigate and monitor the need for special needs housing^{vi}, including but not limited to emergency shelter, transitional housing and/or special care facilities.
- 2.1.6. Recognize market housing as a critical component of Whistler's housing mix.

3. GOAL: REDUCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY IMPACTS OF RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS TO IMPROVE THE OVERALL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MUNICIPALITY.

3.1. Objective: Encourage environmental and energy efficient design, construction and renovation standards for both new and redevelopment of residential areas.

- 3.1.1. Policy: Encourage all new buildings and renovations to be built with best practices pursuant to environmentally sustainable methods, standards and technologies.
- 3.1.2. Policy: Encourage property owners that replace old housing with new housing to incorporate into the new design, as many features as possible that will reduce consumption of energy, water, and other resources.
- 3.1.3. Policy: Discourage zoning for low density detached dwellings and increase efficient use of existing infrastructure in developed areas as a means to prevent urban sprawl.
- 3.1.4. Policy: Monitor infrastructure and increase capacity in strategic locations to promote compact infill residential land use

consistent with the Growth Management and Climate Action and Energy policies of this Plan.

- 3.1.5. Policy: Ensure neighbourhoods are well connected to local transit, trails, green space as well as amenities and services.

VISITOR ACCOMODATION^{vii}

4. GOAL: PROMOTE OVERNIGHT VISITS AND SUPPORT WHISTLER'S YEAR-ROUND TOURISM ECONOMY.

4.1. Objective: Deliver and maintain a broad range of accommodation offerings to serve the needs of the visitor market.

OBJECTIVE 4.1 TEXT BOX: Delivering a diverse mix of accommodation was established as a policy objective in Whistler's first 1976 OCP and is equally relevant today in the face of intense competition for destination resort visitors. Maintaining a concentration of commercial visitor accommodations dedicated for visitor use is essential to serve the resort market. Approximately 55% of Whistler's accommodation capacity is designated as commercial or residential tourist accommodation¹. Visitor accommodation available for nightly use is designated and protected through zoning and rental pool covenants. Phase 1² and Phase 2³ rental pool covenants that ensure the availability of 'warm' public beds the majority of the year is a key success factor for the resort community.

- 4.1.1. Policy: Provide a diverse visitor accommodation mix that responds to visitor needs and market trends and provides a variety of locations, unit types, and associated amenities compatible with adjacent uses.
- 4.1.2. Policy: Maintain and enhance the existing supply of zoned and covenanted visitor accommodation to protect its availability the majority of the year.
- 4.1.3. Policy: Recognize and continue to apply guidelines to existing Bed and Breakfast^{viii} and Pension^{ix} locations to ensure

¹ Residential Tourist Accommodation (RTA) consists of single-family, duplex and multi-family dwellings primarily focused near the core commercial areas and major resort amenities and facilities. There are approximately 2,000 RTA dwelling units available for visitor accommodation when not occupied for residential use.

² Phase 1 rental pool covenants allow unrestricted owner use, but require the unit to be placed in a rental pool when not occupied for owner use.

³ Phase 2 rental pool covenants allow for visitor priority use, limiting owner use to 56 days during the year. Timeshare rental covenants are another form of rental agreement that set out the use (generally the purchase of weekly increments; in some cases with an equity stake or ownership in the timeshare property itself).

compatibility with adjacent residential uses; do not support any new locations within residential neighbourhoods.

4.1.4. Policy: Maintain the Resort Lands designation under the Resort Municipality of Whistler Act.

POLICY TEXT BOX: Under the *Resort Municipality of Whistler Act*, owners of designated Resort Lands⁴ hold compulsory membership in the Whistler Resort Association (Tourism Whistler) and are required to pay statutory annual fees to fund its operations⁵. TW is responsible for promoting the resort as an international, four-season destination with the goal of increasing overnight visitation. The *Resort Lands* designation and membership provides an important mechanism to enable cohesive world-wide resort marketing and sales—a cornerstone for the destination resort. Visitor accommodation properties' participation in the cost of resort marketing is essential as they directly benefit from these efforts.

4.2. Objective: Balance the visitor accommodation supply in line with Whistler's resort and tourism capacity.

4.2.1. Policy: Do not support further expansion of the visitor accommodation supply.

POLICY TEXT BOX: Approximately 94% of Whistler's visitor accommodation capacity has been built⁶; given the current economic climate and below-target average occupancies, development of additional visitor accommodation in the near term may compromise the viability of and dilute Whistler's existing stock of visitor accommodations.

4.2.2. Policy: Commit to annually update the resort community accommodation land use inventory and monitor, assess and utilize key visitor accommodation trends and performance indicators to inform policy and guide future land use decisions.

4.2.3. Policy: Work with resort partners and the accommodation sector to optimize utilization of existing visitor accommodations to achieve and sustain economically viable occupancy rates^x.

⁴ Resort Lands designation under the RMOW Act includes commercial and tourist accommodation within the core commercial areas and those lands outside commercial core developed for tourist accommodation or pension that have a Section 215 rental pool covenant. Exemptions to Resort Lands designation: resident housing, B&Bs (voluntary WRA members), residential zones, commercial service station, heliport, float plane, industrial service, light industrial, leisure park and recreation zones permitting hostel use or any like zone.

⁵ Membership assessments are the primary source of funding for the world-wide marketing and sales initiatives that Tourism Whistler manages and directs, supplemented by net income from operating centres, sponsorship and funding.

⁶ Whistler's developed visitor accommodation capacity includes 6,900 commercial dwelling units and 2004 RTA dwellings units for a total of 8906 dwelling units. Another 612 hotel and tourist accommodation and RTA units remain undeveloped within the resort community's approved development capacity (Year-end 2009 Accommodation Land Use Inventory data).

POLICY TEXT BOX: Whistler’s economic prosperity is dependent on attracting visitors to the resort. As overnight visits have the greatest economic impact through visitor spending, achieving and maintaining hotel occupancies⁷ are vital to sustain the resort economy. Economically-viable occupancy rates allow Whistler to optimize use of its capital investments and assets. Whistler continues to experience the effects of the global economic downturn with below target occupancies. Whistler’s seasonal occupancy rate was 57% for the 2009/10 winter season, dropping to 44% in the summer of 2010 (Source: Tourism Whistler); this remains below the resort’s target occupancy rate of 65%. Declining occupancy rates can influence average daily rate integrity as hoteliers reduce rates to remain competitive and maintain occupancies. There may be some locations where visitor accommodation has historic poor-performance. In these cases, it may be in the interest of the resort and the owners to consider other uses as alternatives to visitor accommodation.

4.2.4. Policy: Examine and consider opportunities to support alternate uses of visitor accommodation upon request of the owners where appropriate and consistent with this plan and to the benefit of the resort community.

4.2.5. Policy: Review and establish policy for consideration of ownership models and use restrictions for an appropriate mix of visitor accommodation to support the long-term viability of the visitor accommodation sector.

POLICY TEXT BOX: To successfully compete as a destination resort, Whistler requires an appropriate range of accommodation to meet diverse visitor needs. It is equally important however that the mix of accommodation offerings provides appropriate levels of guest service and meets market demands. The presence of branded overnight properties with a commitment to high levels of guest service is vital for the Resort. With the emergence of alternative investment models such as fractional ownership, which has compounded existing property management issues, policy is needed to determine the appropriate amount/mix of unit types and instruments to address the use of fractional ownership, timeshare, whole ownership, strata hotels etc.

5. GOAL: VISITOR ACCOMMODATION AMENITIES AND SERVICES EXCEED VISITOR EXPECTATIONS.

5.1. Objective: Provide consistent high quality guest services.

OBJECTIVE 5.1 TEXT BOX: It is important that the Whistler community strive to deliver accommodation that meets guest expectations. It is known that full-service hotels deliver very high levels of customer satisfaction. Wherever possible, full service hotels are encouraged. At the same time, it is recognized that there may be other methods of delivering a similar high level of service. The Municipality is supportive of any appropriate methods to deliver high service levels for the resort’s overnight guests.

⁷ Whistler’s occupancy rate reflects the number of rooms sold as a proportion of the total rooms available for sale in the report for a given time period. This data is collected by Tourism Whistler annually; actual figures are not released publicly by TW for competitive reasons.

- 5.1.1. Policy: Support full-service^{xi} visitor accommodation and investigate tools to deliver enhanced levels of service.
- 5.1.2. Recognize non-full service visitor accommodation as an important component of Whistler’s accommodation supply.
- 5.1.3. Encourage non-full service visitor accommodation to deliver high service levels.
- 5.1.4. Policy: Encourage and support the provision of adequate space within visitor accommodation developments for operations and guest services and consider alternative service delivery models, such as shared facilities, where appropriate.
- 5.1.5. Policy: Investigate opportunities to enhance visitor accommodation guest services, including the creation of a centralized visitor check-in facility as part of a resort “amenity hub”.
- 5.1.6. Policy: Encourage consistent high standards of practice for visitor accommodation services.
- 5.1.7. Encourage visitor accommodation operators to provide for a high quality visitor experience.

6. GOAL: VISITOR ACCOMMODATIONS ARE CONTINUALLY RENEWED TO ENSURE THE RESORT OFFERING REMAINS COMPETITIVE IN THE RESORT MARKETPLACE.

6.1.Objective: Facilitate and encourage ongoing property maintenance and necessary reinvestment to ensure accommodations are attractive, functional, clean, safe and accessible.

- 6.1.1. Policy: Require a high standard of quality for all development, redevelopment and enhancement projects.

POLICY TEXT BOX: Necessary reinvestment in aging visitor accommodation is needed to provide a high quality guest experience that in turn promotes visitation, visitor satisfaction and positive net

promoter scores. The Municipality will uphold property maintenance standards through the RMOW Property Maintenance Bylaw to ensure that visitor accommodations are *attractive, functional, clean, safe and accessible*. The Municipality will work cooperatively with the accommodation sector, the development community, property owners and managers to ensure that visitor accommodations and services are upgraded and maintained to promote positive visitor experiences and net promoter scores⁸.

6.1.2. Policy: To strengthen the visitor experience, the municipality will require and uphold high standards of exterior property maintenance for all visitor accommodation.

6.1.3. Policy: Encourage collaborative efforts and partnerships to facilitate continued reinvestment, enhancement and maintenance of visitor accommodation properties as a means of improving the visitor experience.

7. GOAL: VISITOR ACCOMMODATIONS PROGRESSIVELY TRANSITION TOWARDS AND EXEMPLIFY THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF ENERGY, MATERIALS AND WATER.

7.1. Objective: Support Whistler's goals for greenhouse gas emissions reduction and energy and water conservation.

7.1.1. Policy: To support our community energy reduction and GHG emissions targets, the Municipality will encourage construction and renovations that advance RMOW green building policies and associated performance goals.

POLICY TEXT BOX: Whistler's green building policies provide guidance for building design, construction and operation and set out performance goals that are progressively more ambitious over time. The Municipality will continue to encourage submission of green building checklists for proposals for new or significant redevelopment to achieve consistency with green building goals and objectives for commercial visitor accommodations. In some cases, green building commitments are required through zoning. Further, the Municipality will apply newly-updated DP guidelines for energy and water conservation to new or significant redevelopment projects.

7.1.2. Policy: Encourage and support the provision of adequate space within visitor accommodation developments for waste reduction operations and services, where appropriate.

⁸ The net promoter score is a measure used to determine if a surveyed guest would recommend Whistler as a destination resort.

GLOSSARY TERMS

ⁱ **Retirees:** Individuals who qualify as an eligible employee or retiree under the WHA eligibility requirements and have ceased active employment but who have been an employee for five of the six years, within the boundaries of the Resort Municipality of Whistler, immediately preceding the date on which the individual ceased employment. Employees are either employed or self-employed for an average of not less than 20 hours per week on an annual basis at a business

located with the boundaries of the Resort Municipality of Whistler which holds an RMOW business license or recognized equivalent (WHA).

ⁱⁱ **Resident Restricted:** (WHA) see current OCP definition of ‘Resident Accommodation’: *“residential accommodation restricted pursuant to a lease, covenant or other instrument to occupancy by persons employed or residing within the Municipality.”*

ⁱⁱⁱ **Infill Housing:** The incremental addition of new Dwelling Units within existing developed areas (from Infill Bylaw 1913, 2009).

^{iv} **‘Live-Work’:** Use of a dwelling unit for the conduct of a home occupation; home occupation means a craft or occupation conducted as an accessory use subordinate to the principal use of a residential dwelling. *(adapted from zoning bylaw 303)*

^v **Seniors Housing:** Housing for individuals who are at least 65 years of age, and have met the eligibility requirements to be a member of the Mature Action Committee or who qualify as an eligible employee or retiree under the WHA eligibility requirements (*Seniors Housing Task Force report definition; note Council resolution December 15, 2003 includes age restriction of 65 years*). Consideration for the location of seniors housing generally include proximity to services, amenities and access to transportation.

^{vi} Special Needs Housing

^{vii} **Visitor Accommodation:** Accommodation available for nightly rentals and used for temporary lodging by visitors, including hotel, inn and lodge accommodations, as well as bed and breakfast and pension guest rooms, campgrounds, hostel and club cabins.

^{viii} **Bed and Breakfast:** Use of a detached dwelling for the rental of three or less guest rooms for the temporary lodging of paying guests and the use of common living and dining areas by such guests. *(adapted from zoning bylaw 303 and existing OCP definition)*

^{ix} **Pension:** Use of a building for tourist accommodation for the rental of four to eight guest rooms for the temporary lodging of paying guests and the use of common living and dining areas in the building by such guests. *(adapted from zoning bylaw 303 and existing OCP definition)*

^x **Occupancy Rate:** Represents the proportion of occupied visitor accommodation on a seasonal or annual basis, calculated as the total number of paid room nights divided by the total number of rooms available within the resort community (*TW; definition adapted from Whistler 2020 ‘occupancy rate’ core indicator measure*).

^{xi} **Full service** (visitor accommodation): Full service visitor accommodations focus on consistent service quality, providing, user-friendly reservations, full check-in/out facilities, as well as other guest amenities such as concierge, 24-hour room service, turn down service, business centre and other related services and generally exhibit a high level of maintenance and refurbishment.