

## **STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**PRESENTED:** December 7, 2021 **REPORT:** 21-134  
**FROM:** Planning – Policy **FILE:** 7083  
**SUBJECT:** WHISTLER AGE-FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN PROJECT –  
FINAL REPORT

### **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

**That** the recommendation of the General Manager of Resort Experience be endorsed.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**That** Council receive Information Report No. 21-134 regarding the final report for the Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project, attached as Appendix A.

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to present the final report for the Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project (Final Report) to Council. The Final Report is the outcome of the project that was conducted by municipal staff with Cardea Health Consulting Inc. from April to October 2021.

Information Report  Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Background**

The Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) 2020 Age-friendly Communities Program helps B.C. communities support aging populations by: developing and implementing policies and plans; undertaking projects that enable seniors and Elders to age-in-place; and facilitating the creation of age-friendly communities. Local governments may apply for funding under two streams: 1) Age-friendly Assessments, Action Plans & Planning; and 2) Age-friendly Projects.

On December 3, 2019, Council received correspondence on behalf of the Whistler Mature Action Community (MAC), regarding the UBCM 2020 Age-friendly Communities Program.

On January 21, 2020, Council endorsed the submission of a grant application to Stream 1 of the UBCM program. The focus of the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW)'s application was to undertake an assessment of Whistler's current age-friendliness and then develop a plan to support local seniors to age-in-place and to further make Whistler an age-friendly community.

UBCM awarded the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) a \$24,418.00 grant under Stream 1 on March 10, 2020. On April 6, 2021, Council received Information Report No. 21-029, which informed Council of the UBCM grant funding and provided an outline of the project work plan.

## **Analysis**

The Final Report for this project is titled “Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project – Final Report” and is attached as Appendix A. The Final Report summarizes the assessment of the current age-friendly situation in Whistler and provides an action plan to support local older adults to age-in-place.

### *Report Structure*

The Final Report is divided into four key sections as follows:

- Section 1 introduces the project, provides acknowledgments and outlines the report structure;
- Section 2 details the project’s methodology;
- Section 3 presents the results of Whistler’s age-friendly needs assessment and provides a plan for potential actions; and
- Section 4 identifies considerations for implementation and a framework for future evaluation.

The Final Report also includes five appendices that provide additional information as follows:

- Appendix A presents the terms of reference for the project’s working group;
- Appendix B details background information on age-friendly planning, with a focus on the Canadian, B.C. and Whistler contexts;
- Appendix C describes Whistler’s community profile and includes demographic information that is relevant to the project;
- Appendix D lists RMOW policies related to age-friendly planning by topic; and
- Appendix E details the results of the project’s community survey.

### *Eight Age-friendly Dimensions*

The project and the Final Report used the eight well-established age-friendly dimensions as the overarching framework for the needs assessment and the action plan. Introduced by the World Health Organization, the eight age-friendly dimensions are expressed by UBCM as follows:

- Outdoor spaces and buildings;
- Transportation;
- Housing;
- Respect, social inclusion or cultural safety;
- Social well-being and participation;
- Communications and information;
- Community engagement and employment; and
- Community support and health and wellness services.

In Section 4 of the Final Report, which presents the needs assessment and action plan, the information provided for each dimension consists of the following:

- A section on Whistler’s current age-friendly features;
- A section on “what we heard” during the community engagement, which includes identified opportunities for change to improve age-friendliness; and
- A table with recommended strategies and actions.

### *Action Plan and Implementation*

Overall, the project’s action plan presents a total of 30 strategies and 71 actions. These strategies and actions are distributed across the eight age-friendly dimensions.

Successfully implementing the strategies and actions requires commitment and contributions by many community members and partners. The Final Report identifies key organizations needed for successful action implementation, including: Arts Whistler, BC Transit, MAC, RMOW departments, The Whistler Institute, Whistler Chamber of Commerce, Whistler Community Foundation, Whistler Community Services Society (WCSS), Whistler Housing Authority (WHA), Whistler Museum, Whistler Public Library, Whistler RCMP, Whistler Welcome Centre, Whistler Writing Society, Sea to Sky Better at Home, Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre, and Vancouver Coastal Health.

Additionally, the Final Report identifies an estimated time frame for the completion of actions. It includes short-term (one to two years), medium-term (two to five years), long-term (five to 10 years), and ongoing actions that community partners and the RMOW will consider. Some actions may require significant resources, and implementation will depend on evaluation relative to other organizational priorities and funding opportunities.

Regarding the RMOW’s role in implementation, the RMOW will identify and facilitate a working group to oversee the implementation of the plan. The implementation committee will refer actions to the relevant internal and external groups for consideration within their work plans and develop a schedule for evaluation and monitoring. Additionally, to ensure that community members and stakeholders are kept aware of age-friendly efforts and initiatives, the RMOW will develop on-going communications. To begin, this will include publicly posting the action plan and providing a statement committing to reporting and measuring age-friendly activities.

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## **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions**

[December 3, 2019: UBCM – 2020 Age Friendly Community Funding File No. 3009](#)

[January 21, 2020: Information Report No. 20-006, Grant Application for 2020 Age-friendly Communities Program](#)

[April 6, 2021: Information Report No. 21-029, Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan – Project Update](#)

### **Corporate Plan**

The RMOW Corporate Plan is updated annually and articulates strategic direction for the organization. This section identifies how this report links to the plan.

### Council Focus Areas

Community Balance

*Effectively **balance resort and community needs** through deliberate planning, partnerships and investment*

Climate Action

*Provide leadership to **accelerate climate action and environmental performance** across the community*

Housing

*Advance strategic and innovative initiatives to enable and **deliver additional employee housing***

Pandemic Recovery

*Leadership and support for **community and tourism recovery and sustainability** – priority focuses are where recovery needs intersect with other Council focus areas*

Not Applicable

### Community Vision and Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan (OCP) is the RMOW's most important guiding document that sets the community vision and long-term community direction. This section identifies how this report applies to the OCP.

By involving stakeholders and looking to enhance Whistler's age-friendliness, the project directly supports the vision characteristics related to inclusion and participation. These vision characteristics are as follows:

- **INCLUSIVE:** Residents and visitors of all ages, identities, abilities and incomes are welcome, included, and share our love for nature, active recreation, human connections and innovation.
- **PARTICIPATION:** We are able to meaningfully participate in community decisions, collaborating to achieve our Community Vision.

The project is also aligned with the policy direction in the OCP aimed at supporting the health and well-being of Whistler's seniors. In particular, the project supports Goal 8.10 ("Support the health and well-being of Whistler's youth, young adults and seniors, as well as their active participation in the resort community") and the associated Policy 8.10.2.1. ("Encourage services, programs and facilities that support the health and social needs of seniors, with a focus on cultural and recreational opportunities and social programs tailored to the needs of Whistler's seniors").

Additionally, the implementation of the project's action plan will support the goals, objectives and policies of the OCP within Chapter 5 – Land Use and Development, Chapter 8 – Health, Safety and Well-being, Chapter 9 – Learning, Culture, and Recreation and Chapter 11 – Transportation. The supporting OCP policy statements are identified in Appendix D in the project's Final Report.

## BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Funding for the Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project was provided through the UBCM grant program noted above. The consultant costs were 100 per cent covered by the UBCM grant. The existing Planning Department budget provided for staff resources associated with completion of the work.

Implementation of several of the actions can be covered under the Planning Department's project budget for 2022 and beyond. Consideration will also be given to possible senior levels of government grant opportunities that may arise. Ongoing collaboration among community partner organizations in Whistler will be important moving forward.

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## LIL'WAT NATION & SQUAMISH NATION CONSIDERATIONS

The RMOW is committed to working with the Lil'wat People, known in their language as *L'il'wat7úl* and the Squamish People, known in their language as the *Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* to: create an enduring relationship; establish collaborative processes for Crown land planning; achieve mutual objectives; and enable participation in Whistler's resort economy. This section identifies areas where RMOW activities intersect with these relationships.

Squamish Nation and Lil'wat Nation were provided information on the project and were invited to be part of the project's working group. The following strategy is included within the project's action plan: *commit to working to include Lil'wat Nation and Squamish Nation in age-friendly implementation and evaluation*. As actions are implemented, ongoing consultation with Lil'wat Nation and Squamish Nation should be considered by the RMOW and community organizations to seek input on older adults and elders. A copy of the Final Report will be shared with each Nation as a follow-up.

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## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

Inform     Consult     Involve     Collaborate     Empower

Comment(s):

Community engagement and consultation was an important element of the Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project. The project included a working group, community survey, and interviews and focused conversations with older adults, service providers and caregivers. These consultation activities are discussed further below. In addition, the Final Report will be posted to the RMOW's website so that it may be shared broadly with the Whistler community.

### *Working Group*

The project's working group was formed at the outset of the project and met four times between June and October, 2021. The working group was comprised of two at-large Whistler community members representing older adults, one RMOW Councillor, RMOW staff from the Planning and Infrastructure Services Departments and one representative from each of the following community organizations: Better at Home, MAC, Vancouver Coastal Health, Whistler Community Foundation, Whistler Community Services Society, Whistler Cycling Club, and Whistler Housing Authority. The purpose of the working group was to give input on public engagement opportunities, assist in the development of a shared vision and goals, help define roles and responsibilities for multiple stakeholders, and work to

identify strategic priorities and concrete on-the-ground actions to achieve the age-friendly assessment and action plan recommendations.

### *Community Survey*

The survey was open to the public online for three weeks between June 28 and July 18, 2021 and hard copies were made available at Municipal Hall, Meadow Parks Sports Centre and the Whistler Public Library. The survey was advertised through several mediums, including newspaper advertisements, posters throughout Whistler, the Mayor's report at Council meetings and online through the RMOW website, social media channels, the Whistler Today newsletter and a media release. In total, 375 people responded to the survey. The complete survey results are included as Appendix E in the Final Report.

### *Interviews and Focused Conversations*

Stakeholders were invited to give feedback via online or telephone interviews or an online focused conversation. Participants were recruited through posters placed throughout Whistler, advertisements in the local newspaper, the project webpage, and word of mouth. Twenty-two individuals were interviewed including two caregivers, twelve older adults (six men and six women), and eight service providers. Interview subjects had various socioeconomic backgrounds, differing levels of mobility, and several had workplace experiences providing health services to older adults. There was one focused conversation with service providers.

### *Whistler Community Foundation Vital Café – Aging Well in Whistler*

This online community event was organized and hosted by the Whistler Community Foundation on September 22, 2021 and provided an additional opportunity for RMOW staff to hear action planning ideas. Several of the ideas raised by Café participants were subsequently fed into the Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Planning Project for the working group's further consideration.

### *Future Collaboration*

Ongoing collaboration among stakeholders will be important moving forward. The strategies and actions presented in the project's Final Report provide a sense of direction for Whistler moving forward – and implementation will require the efforts and contributions of many community partners.

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## **REFERENCES**

Appendix A – Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project Final Report – December 2021

## **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this Information Report is to present the Final Report for the Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project to Council. The Final Report, along with other required documentation, will be submitted to UBCM by RMOW staff. The report also provides a basis for ongoing collaborative efforts and integration of RMOW related action items that may be achieved within current municipal operating and capital budgets, as well as for consideration of future potential opportunities and associated resource requirements.

**SIGN-OFFS**

**Written by:**

Joanna Rees,  
Planning Analyst – Policy

Courtney Beaubien,  
Manager of Planning – Policy

**Reviewed by:**

Mike Kirkegaard,  
Director of Planning

Jessie Gresley-Jones,  
General Manager of Resort Experience

Virginia Cullen,  
Chief Administrative Officer