



Claire Thornthwaite & Tom Prochazka

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April 8, 2022

CAO, Mayor and Council
Resort Municipality of Whistler
4325 Blackcomb Way
Whistler, BC V8E 0X5

RE: Whitegold Beautification Project

Ms. Cullen, Honourable Mayor and Council,

We are long term, full-time residents of Whitegold, and would like to register our continued **opposition** to the Whitegold "Beautification" Undergrounding project for the following reasons:

1. **Budget:** As disclosed during the March 16, 2022 Zoom meeting, the cost projection far exceeds the maximum petition value. Given current levels of inflation, this discrepancy can only be expected to increase, thus, at least, a re-vote should be prompted. Furthermore, we believe that it is an irresponsible investment of public time and money continuing with the planning for this uncertain project given that is non-beneficial to the community at large.
2. **Personal Expenses/housing:** We all know that Whistler is experiencing an affordable housing crisis. Our community should be taking every action possible to alleviate housing insecurity, not wasting resources on superficial "improvements". Rental properties/suites still exist in Whitegold. One can only assume that a 50-60K increase in homeowner expense will be passed down to tenants. This 50-60K expense represents a vast amount of money to many (obviously not all) homeowners. The recent soaring of real estate value is only beneficial if one is planning on selling and moving out of town. It is already virtually impossible for young people, who keep this town vibrant, to raise families here. Regular tax increases, even without this project add-on will be onerous to many, and tax deferral is simply another form of debt. I am confident that Council does not buy into the myth that all Whistler residents have endless access to funds. We need to think of our neighbors when making community decisions that affect us all.
3. **Disruption:** We, as permanent residents, had the un-pleasant experience of living through a massive reconstruction project during the water service upgrade a few years ago. We were happy to endure this disruption as it was a necessary and welcome infrastructure upgrade. This "beautification project", spanning from March to November, will be another 3 seasons living in a construction zone. Many Whitegold homes are empty during this time, so it is understandable that their owners do not consider the inconvenience, disruption, constant noise and dust pollution that residents will experience if this goes through.

4. **Design:** We have yet to see the detailed design that was promised from Nov 2020 to Fall 2021. The March 16th meeting warned of the width of public streets and cited examples of gardens being replaced with transformer boxes and up to 30 trees being removed. One example showed the destruction of an entire small grove of trees in the middle of a driveway. We are at a loss to imagine how this could be considered "beautification" let alone remotely ecological. A detailed design must be in place and presented publicly (in person), with BC Hydro experts present, prior to any re-petition as we trust that specific details and the loss of already shrinking neighborhood greenspace will sway people's decisions.
5. **Process:** If/when this project goes to a re-petition, we trust that Council will re-think its approval based not only on the obvious economic and environmental impacts, but on a re-set of priorities given the circumstances that have affected our town since the project's inception. Just because 50% of residents can easily absorb the expense – does not justify the project. Whistler is currently fighting for its soul. This is no time to stand purely on process.
6. **Utility Outages:** We have lived here for over 30 years fulltime and cannot recall any outages of services stemming from downed or damaged utility lines in Whitegold. We fail to see any reason for replacing a perfectly good system that is safe and efficient. If/when Hydro deems the lines to be past their prime, or a safety concern, we assume they will upgrade them at their cost.

In conclusion, we re-iterate our desire to put an end to this project. We are all so fortunate to live in such a beautiful and amazing place. Our subdivision has history, character and no shortage of natural beauty. Rather than supporting a divisive project, we look forward to the Municipality continuing to focus on the many ongoing initiatives that provide value for the community at large. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Claire Thornthwaite and Tom Prochazka