



June 6, 2022

To: The Resort Municipality of Whistler

**Re: Howe Sound Community Forum 2022 and beyond**

Dear Mayor Crompton and Council:

This letter is a request for:

1. A letter of support for the updated Howe Sound Community Forum Principles for Cooperation
2. Commitment to host a Howe Sound Community Forum in 2023.
3. Support via a Memorandum of Understanding with the Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society.

**Background**

The Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) was a founding member of the Howe Sound Community Forum in 2000 and played a key role in the development of the original Principles for Cooperation. Successive RMOW Council members have participated in the bi-annual meetings and sub-committees of the Howe Sound Community Forum.

The RMOW was an active supporter of the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound UNESCO Biosphere Region designation. Having achieved this designation in 2021, the next phase is sustaining the UNESCO designation for future generations. The Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS) is responsible for the management of the Biosphere Region. Sustaining the organization requires continued support from the authorities, collaboration and reliance on various sources of funding.

At the October 2021 forum on Bowen Island and the April 2022 forum at Furry Creek, Mayor Elliott, District of Squamish, invited forum members to consider long-term support of the HSBRIS to ensure the UNESCO designation is maintained, and the Howe Sound Community Forum continues. We responded to the feedback received from the Forum members; this letter is the next step.

*Continued...*

## **Maintaining the Howe Sound Community Forum 2022 and Beyond**

The attached Principles for Cooperation have been updated to reflect the societal and logistical changes since the last update in 2014. We are asking for the Resort Municipality of Whistler to acknowledge and support these changes. Please see the proposed letter of support attached.

Forum members take turns hosting, and the Resort Municipality of Whistler hosted in 2009 and was intending to host just as closures due to COVID-19 began. With your support, RMOW is now rescheduled to host in 2023. A commitment to budget \$4,500, or \$1,125 for each of the next four years would include costs of attendance and participation for elected council members and staff to attend all bi-annual forums and sub-committees convened by HSBRIS.

## **Sustaining the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound UNESCO Designation**

One of the recommendations discussed amongst forum members was for each of the Howe Sound Community Forum member local governments to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with HSBRIS. Please see the draft attached. This MOU outlines the role of HSBRIS, common objectives and ways the community can support HSBRIS. Appendix A provides various options for financial and in-kind support.

As the pressures of growth, development and the impacts of climate change affect our region, we hope Resort Municipality of Whistler will continue to participate in the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound community of communities and take pride in the prestigious UNESCO recognition that is reflective of this beautiful part of the world where humanity and nature thrive.

Sincerely,

*Ruth Simons*

Ruth Simons  
President, Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society  
[howesoundbri@gmail.com](mailto:howesoundbri@gmail.com)

PO Box 465  
Lions Bay, B.C.  
V0N 2E0

Enclosures:

1. Principles for Cooperation with tracked changes
2. Principles for Cooperation clean final copy
3. Sample letter of support to HSBRIS
4. Draft Memorandum of Understanding
5. Appendix A



## Principles for Cooperation Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Community Forum

To provide an overview of the need, purpose and structure for cooperative efforts by interested local governments and First Nations operating on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples in the Átl'ka7tsem Howe Sound region.

### 1. Statement of Purpose

To provide a forum for elected representatives of local governments, Regional Districts and First Nations as well as federal and provincial elected members to have discussions focused on how to maintain and enhance the economic, environmental, cultural and social well-being of the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound (the Region) for the benefit of present and future generations.

### 2. Rationale (The Need)

The Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Community Forum (the Forum) will enhance collective action among local governments, regional districts and First Nations by:

- Providing a common forum for dialogue
- Sharing knowledge and information to avoid duplication of effort and to enhance any single organization's capacity for action
- Promoting the use of transparent processes that encourage awareness and involvement.
- Providing a forum for gaining a better understanding of and from First Nations peoples in the Region.

### 3. Scope

The Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound region includes the marine waters and all the lands that drain into these waters, the surrounding airshed on the east side of the Salish Sea (Strait of Georgia) between Point Atkinson and Gower Point, and interested adjacent communities.

### 4. Common Vision

The Forum envisions that communities within the Region can be healthy, productive and sustainable by:

- understanding the use and occupancy of the region by the Squamish Nation/Skw̓xwú7mesh Úxwumixw, who have occupied and managed Átl'ka7tsem for many thousands of years;
- building appreciation for the spiritual and cultural values of the region;
- understanding, promoting and implementing best practices, including traditional practices;
- promoting compact and complete communities;
- encouraging safe and livable communities;

- encouraging an integrated transportation system;
- preserving a healthy and natural environment;
- nurturing cultural heritage
- supporting sustainable use of resources;
- fostering a vibrant and dynamic economy;
- raising awareness about land use; and
- ensuring the public is informed and encouraged to be active.

## 5. Shared Values

The Forum will involve the collective efforts of First Nations and a wide variety of governments, non-government organizations, the private sector, educational institutions and individuals to pursue the following values and objectives. The Forum shares the following values and objectives.

### Value...Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Titles

Objective – Respect and support of Aboriginal Rights and Title, traditional knowledge and sacred places....

### Value...Spirit of Sharing

Objective - The many interests and organizations in the Region can strengthen the effectiveness of programs by openly sharing information and knowledge.

### Value... Action Orientation

Objective - The Forum will encourage groups to take actions that produce positive observable results and public benefit to communities.

### Value...Efforts towards Sustainability

Objective – The Forum members recognize the need to effectively manage and maintain a balanced relationship between community development and the protection of unique biophysical, First Nations sacred places and cultural qualities, and the unique biophysical and environmental qualities of the Region.

### Value.. The need for Cooperation and observing protocol

Objective -Governments, First Nations and organizations will be encouraged to work together.

### Value...Stewardship

Objective - Voluntary action of individuals and organizations as a powerful and effective tool for achieving positive results. ~~is an objective of the Forum.~~

### Value... Transcending Jurisdictions

Objective - The Forum will encourage communities to work together for the greater good because jurisdictional territorial lines on a map mean nothing in terms of sustainability.

### Value...Focus and Transparency

Objective - Forum member programs will encourage clear objectives and use accountable processes that are available to Forum members and the public.

### Value... Respect for Diversity

Objective - It is recognized that while every member of the **Forum** may have a different focus or interest, they are encouraged to acknowledge a shared interest in the sustainability of the **Region**.

## 6. Structure (The Members)

A hosting community from the membership **will work cooperatively with the Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS) as the convening organization.** ~~They act as the focal point and be responsible to coordinate meetings and agenda material.~~

The hosting community will rotate among **the Forum** members, and meetings will be held bi-annually, or more frequently, as requested by any member or as predicated by local issues.

Task forces or subforums may be established to focus on specific projects.

Charter members of the **Átl'ka7sem/**Howe Sound Community Forum include elected representatives of the **following** communities ~~at:~~

Bowen Island Municipality	Squamish Nation/ <b>Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw</b>
Gambier Island Local Trust Committee	Sunshine Coast Regional District
Town of Gibsons	Village of Lions Bay
Metro Vancouver Regional District	District of West Vancouver
District of Squamish	Resort Municipality of Whistler
Squamish-Lillooet Regional District	<del>Village of Pemberton</del>
<b>West Vancouver/Sunshine Coast/Sea to Sky Member of Parliament</b>	
<b>Powell River/Sunshine Coast Member of the Legislative Assembly</b>	
<b>West Vancouver/Sea to Sky Member of the Legislative Assembly</b>	

## 6. Other Participants

Neighbouring communities, First Nations, organizations and members of society who have a shared interest in the region and support these Principles for Cooperation are welcome to participate in the forums as observers and/or presenters.

## 7. Activities (Action and Results)

The Forum members are not expected to make decisions as a body and will achieve its objectives through activities that build on the talents, knowledge and actions of its individual members by:

- Facilitating information exchange about local or regional projects.
- Supporting members by sharing information, research and best practices.
- Apprise the public of topical and important matters that affect us all.
- Identifying areas of public **policy that require attention and projects that deserve attention or support of Forum members.** ~~policy that require attention and projects that deserve the support of the Forum members.~~
- Assessing progress through the benchmark, monitoring, and program assessments; and

- Promoting transparency and accessibility by the Forum members.

## 8. Logistics (Organizing and Facilitating)

The role of the Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society as the convening organization is to:

- Maintain and make publicly available a historical record of the past forums
- Work with future hosts and appointed host representative(s) to plan and organize future forums
- Maintain contact records of invitees and appointed representatives of the members
- Recommend topics and themes of relevant interest to the Forum members.
- Develop and maintain respectful interactions and communications
- Plan, organize and coordinate the logistics and technology for successful engagement and attendance
- Initiate, manage and maintain invitations, attendance and respond to requests
- M/C the event to ensure members and observers are participating respectfully
- Manage the recording of the event and items for follow-up.
- Negotiate costs, manage budget, bookkeeping, and prompt payments.

The role of the host community is to:

- Budget and fund the costs of hosting a forum which includes costs of:
  - Venue for up to 70 people
  - A/V equipment needs
  - Catering
  - HSBRIS convening costs
  - Negotiable extras such as transportation, post tour, honorariums
- Appoint representatives to be the point of contact for planning and support before, during and after the event.

**Therefore, unless explicitly expressed, all the Howe Sound Community Forum members commit to respecting the Principles for Cooperation.**

It is understood the Principles for Cooperation may be amended from time to time and will be circulated to members and participants in advance of each Forum.

May 2022



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May 2022



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## **Memorandum of Understanding (DRAFT)**

*Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative and Resort Municipality of Whistler*  
**Collaborating for a Sustainable Future**

- UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- AHSUBR Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound UNESCO Biosphere Region
- HSBRIS Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society
- AHSCF Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Community Forum
- POC Principles of Cooperation
- RMOW Resort Municipality of Whistler

### **1) The Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound UNESCO Biosphere Region (AHSUBR)**

This is the unceded territory of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, (Squamish Nation People). The In-SHUCK-ch, Katzie, Lílwat, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), shíshálh (Sechelt), Stó:lō, Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and First Nations within the St'at'imc Chiefs' Council (includes Lillooet Tribal Council Bands), and the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group have claims in the region.

- a) The AHSUBR boundary follows the partial watershed from the height of land to the bottom of the ocean and includes lands and communities within three regional districts of Metro Vancouver (West Vancouver, Bowen Island, Lions Bay and Area A), Sunshine Coast (Gibsons and Areas E, Elphinstone and F West Howe Sound) and Squamish Lillooet (Furry Creek, Britannia Beach, Squamish and Brackendale).
- b) Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Region is 218,723 hectares, 84% terrestrial and 16% marine. 6% is Rural Regional District and Reserve Lands, 5% of the terrestrial is privately owned or "urban" and 89% of the terrestrial area is under the management and shared stewardship of the Province of BC and First Nations.

### **2) Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS)**

Is a B.C. registered non-profit Society and is responsible for the management of the AHSUBR through the Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan; and for advancing the objectives of UNESCO Biosphere Regions (biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, reconciliation, model regions for learning, research and monitoring). UNESCO Biosphere Region organizations provide logistic support.

HSBRIS' priorities are to:

- a) Advance Sustainable Development. Key partnerships and adequate supports, data and tools are in place for planning gaps across the region to be filled; and the region's sustainability targets are defined and embedded with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the planning and decision-making processes.
- b) Advance Biodiversity Conservation. Key partnerships work to further education, monitoring, and research, fill knowledge gaps, and increase stewardship and connection to place.

- c) Advance Reconciliation, Equity & Inclusion. The AHSUBR roundtable and forums for convening in an ethical space are well established to further the relationships, dialogue and understanding in the context of all AHSUBR nations and communities.

HSBRIS provides logistic support through programs aimed at strengthening collaboration for a sustainable future. Programs include communications, convening and facilitating, advising and coordinating projects. HSBRIS has a mutual cooperative working relationship defined through a Terms of Reference with RMOW's Fire and Ice UNESCO Geopark initiative.

HSBRIS provides support to the Howe Sound Community Forum and other subcommittees of the forum by planning, coordinating and reporting. HSBRIS maintains a trusted role.

### **3) Resort Municipality of Whistler**

The RMOW is located 59 kilometres north of the District of Squamish along the Sea to Sky highway and spans an area of 24,500 hectares. Situated in the coastal mountain range, the lands drain down to the waters in Howe Sound.

Situated within the shared, unceded territory of the Łilwat7úl (Lil'wat People) and Słkwxwú7mesh (Squamish People), the RMOW has a permanent population of approximately 13,982 (2021), as well as a larger but rotating population of seasonal workers and over 3.5 million annual visitors.

Vision Statement Whistler: A place where our community thrives, nature is protected and guests are inspired.

- Our resort community thrives on mountain culture and the nature that surrounds us.
- We protect the land – the forests, the lakes and the rivers, and all that they sustain.
- We enjoy a high quality of life in balance with our prosperous tourism economy.
- We seek opportunities for innovation and renewal.
- We recognize the value of our history and the foundations of our resort community.
- We honour those who came before us and respect those who will come after us.
- We move forward with the Lil'wat Nation and Squamish Nation and reconcile with the past.
- We value our relationships and work together as partners and community members.

### **4) The Howe Sound Community Forum and the Principles of Cooperation**

The purpose is to provide a forum for local governments, Regional Districts and First Nations discussions to maintain and enhance the economic, environmental, cultural and social well-being of the Howe Sound for the benefit of present and future generations. The Principles of Cooperation is a document that all members, local governments, regional districts and First Nations, signed in 2002. The Principles of Cooperation state the need, scope, common vision, shared values and structure of the forums.

### **5) Relevant Background**

The signing of the original Howe Sound Community Forum's Principles for Cooperation took place on Bowen Island in 2002. As a signatory to the Principles for Cooperation, RMOW has been an active member of the Forum and its committees. The RMOW hosted a forum in 2009 and had committed to hosting in 2020 before COVID-19 forced a hiatus on in-person gatherings.

The convening of the Howe Sound Community Forum has been conducted by Ruth Simons since 2014. Ruth Simons is now the Executive Director of the Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society.

The RMOW indicated support for the UNESCO Biosphere Region nomination through resolutions by Council recognizing alignment with the Principles for Cooperation (December, 2017) and the letter of support that was included in the UNESCO nomination package.

**6) It is understood:**

The RMOW will support and cooperate with the HSBRS as it manages the AHSUBR and the Howe Sound Community Forum and sub-committees. In doing so the RMOW will act as an Ambassador for the UNESCO Biosphere Region by (details in Appendix A):

- Assigning a staff liaison position as the main point of contact with HSBRS.
- Continue as active and engaged participants in the Howe Sound Community Forum.
- Budget for and host a forum on a rotating schedule.
- Support the Principles of Cooperation and the Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan through the contribution of information.
- Consider the priority goals and objectives of the Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan in policy and planning decisions.
- Promote and reference with pride the UNESCO Biosphere Region.
- Offer and facilitate funding resources for HSBRS for educational opportunities and beneficial projects through grants and/or in-kind support.

It is also understood this memorandum of understanding will be reviewed every new Council term and may be amended at any time by mutual agreement.

On behalf of the Resort Municipality of Whistler

On behalf of Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_Ruth Simons, President\_\_\_\_

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Memorandum of Understanding Appendix A**

**1. Assigning a staff liaison position as the main point of contact for Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound-related projects and planning.**

The role involves knowledge transfer by attending meetings on behalf of the municipality, responding to requests from HSBRS that fall within the spirit of the MOU and communicating back to staff and the Council. The person appointed would have and share knowledge, contribute perspectives, and be knowledgeable of the history and the principles of the UNESCO Biosphere Region and Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan. They would attend meetings and maintain relationships and good communications while respecting the policy direction of the Municipality.

**2. Continue as active and engaged participants in the Howe Sound Community Forum.**

Representatives of the Council and staff will attend the bi-annual forums and sub-committees and will report back to Council. Updates to the Principles for Cooperation as agreed upon by the Forum members will continue to be supported.

**3. Budget for and host a forum in the future.**

The Local Government may offer to host a forum at any time, but at a minimum follow a rotating schedule of the members.

**4. Support the Principles of Cooperation and the Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan through the contribution of information.**

Consider the priority goals and objectives of the Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan in policy and planning decisions

**5. Promote and reference with pride the UNESCO Biosphere Region designation.**

Following the branding guidelines of UNESCO and HSBRIS, the municipality will work with HSBRIS communications and reference the UNESCO designation on its website, through signage and other communications.

**6. Consider the priority goals and objectives of the Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan in policy and planning decisions**

The Municipality acknowledges the UNESCO Biosphere Region requires a management plan that considers the land and marine use of the Biosphere Region. The management plan, referred to as Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan serves as a guiding document for planning.

**7. Support the long-term sustainability of HSBRIS through opportunities to facilitate funding resources for secretariate services, educational opportunities and beneficial projects through grants and/or in-kind support.**

These opportunities may be in the form of:

- Additional fees on commercial filming permits
- Create a nature tax, or service area tax
- Grants in-aid
- An annual contribution for secretariate services
- Funding a portion of project costs or matching funds with other government or funding contributions
- In-kind time of staff resources
- Waiving costs of meeting rooms

Local Government letterhead

## **Sample of communication requested.**

Date

Ruth Simons,  
President,  
Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society  
PO Box 465  
Lions Bay, B.C.  
V0N 2E0  
[howesoundbri@gmail.com](mailto:howesoundbri@gmail.com)

Re: Revisions to the Howe Sound Community Forum Principles for Cooperation May 2022 and Memorandum of Understanding

The Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) was a founding member of the Howe Sound Community Forum since it was formed in 2000, and played a key role in the development of the original Principles for Cooperation. RMOW has actively participated in the bi-annual meetings and sub-committees of the Howe Sound Community Forum. It hosted in 2009 and had intended to host just prior to COVID-19 when all meetings went virtual. We look forward to hosting again in 2023.

We acknowledge the May 2022 changes to the wording of the Principles for Cooperation that reflect the societal and logistical changes over the past twenty years.

RMOW also acknowledges the role and services provided by the Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society through the attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Yours truly,

Mayor