



**RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER**

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## STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

**PRESENTED:** August 2, 2022 **REPORT:** 22-114  
**FROM:** Environmental Stewardship **FILE:** 5290  
**SUBJECT:** BIG MOVES CLIMATE ACTION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

**That** Council adopt the Big Moves Climate Action Implementation Plan (Big Moves CAIP), attached as Appendix A to this Administrative Report to Council No. 22-114;

**That** Council approve replacing the 2016 Community Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) with the 2022 Big Moves CAIP as the guiding organization-wide implementation plan for our climate action Big Moves, Adaptation Goals and related Key Initiatives through to 2030; and further

**That** Council approve replacing the quarterly CECAP progress reports with semi-annual update reports on progress towards achieving the targets outlined in the Big Moves CAIP.

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is twofold. Firstly, the purpose is to share with Council the Big Moves Climate Action Implementation Plan (Big Moves CAIP), which consolidates key aspects of the Big Moves Strategy and the Community Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) with a focus on implementation toward meeting our goals of reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 50% below 2007 levels by 2030 and increasing Whistler's resilience to the impacts of climate change. Secondly, the purpose is to seek Council approval to replace the 2016 CECAP with the 2022 Big Moves CAIP as the guiding climate action implementation plan for Whistler and to move from quarterly update reports on CECAP to semi-annual update reports on the Big Moves CAIP.

Information Report

Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

### DISCUSSION

#### Background

Whistler's vision is to be a place where our community thrives, nature is protected and guests are inspired. Our mountain resort community has a special dependence on weather patterns that deliver sufficient snowfall throughout the winter season and summers that are free of wildfires and associated

smoke. This intrinsic relationship to our climate has heightened awareness about Whistler's shared responsibility to manage our GHG emissions—and the potential impacts on our community and our economy if we do not. Whistler has been a leading community on climate action since 1997.

In 2016, Council adopted Whistler's CECAP to guide the community's efforts in mitigating and adapting to climate change. As directed by Council, staff prepared quarterly CECAP reports to provide regular progress updates on climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts across the organization and community.

In 2020, Council adopted the Big Moves Strategy and a new GHG emissions reduction target of reducing Whistler's GHG emissions to 50 per cent below 2007 levels by 2030. The Big Moves Strategy focused on climate change mitigation priorities that will accelerate climate action in Whistler and achieve significant GHG emission reductions, namely in the transportation, buildings and waste sectors. The Big Moves Strategy was built largely upon the work of the 2016 CECAP and supports the Official Community Plan (OCP). It provides the guiding framework to prioritize sectors, incorporate CECAP actions and new opportunities, and align the community-wide efforts needed to achieve significant GHG emissions reductions.

Over the last year, Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) staff consolidated the CECAP and the Big Moves strategy into the strategically prioritized and action-focused Big Moves CAIP. This Big Moves CAIP is building on the RMOW's previous climate work as it streamlines the detailed complexity of the 2016 CECAP with the prioritized, strategic simplicity and community momentum of the 2020 Big Moves Strategy. This consolidation addresses both Whistler's climate change mitigation and adaptation planning, two key components of a comprehensive, integrated approach to climate action.

Mitigation efforts in this plan are based on the six Big Moves outlined in the 2020 Big Moves Strategy which focuses on the transportation, buildings and waste sectors. The Big Moves and Key Initiatives aim to achieve the 2030 goal to reduce Whistler's community-wide GHG emissions by 50 per cent below 2007 levels.

Adaptation efforts in the Big Moves CAIP originate from the 2016 CECAP and have been consolidated and prioritized into three main adaptation goals related to minimizing threats from wildfires, increasing the resilience of our built environment to extreme weather events, and protecting local ecosystems and biodiversity. All adaptation Goals and Key Initiatives in this plan have the overall aim of increasing the resilience of our natural, built and socio-economic systems to withstand the impacts of climate change that we know are coming or are already underway.

### **Updated climate change projections and risk assessment for Whistler**

A sound understanding of potential changes to Whistler's future climate is the fundamental basis for climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts to be relevant and effective. Therefore, the RMOW retained a consultant, BCG Engineering (BGC), with climate modelling expertise to summarize climate change projections and associated potential vulnerability and risks for Whistler. The primary purpose of this work was to more clearly understand the climate change projections for Whistler over the next 50-80 years. These local climate projections provide clear rationale for taking bold climate action to reduce community emissions. These projections also inform our adaptation strategies to prepare for changes that are expected - and already happening. Similar to the modelling projections done for the CECAP, the updated projections include increased intensity and frequency of rain storms, longer, hotter, drier summers and milder winters with less snow at lower elevations. In addition, the BGC report highlighted that Whistler will see increasing inter-annual variability in temperature and precipitation and that warm/cold and wet/dry seasons may be more extreme – not only extreme in terms of magnitude but

particularly in terms of swings from one year to the next (e.g. really wet to really dry or really warm winter to a really cold winter).

The projected potential impacts of these changes in Whistler's climate range from reduced seasonal planning security, to potential risks to the integrity of our infrastructure and transportation systems, health and safety risks, threats to the natural environment and biodiversity, and small and large-scale economic impacts.

### **Accountability, Monitoring and Reporting**

The Big Moves CAIP provides a strategic approach to implementing all climate mitigation Key Initiatives identified in the Big Moves Strategy and all climate change adaptation Key Initiatives identified through prioritizing the CECAP actions. The Big Moves CAIP plan was informed by and developed in alignment with an internal, comprehensive RMOW work plan that identifies detailed actions, projects, timelines, budgets and lead departments for each key initiative. Detailed discussion and ongoing collaboration with all relevant RMOW departments will ensure that all Key Initiatives are included in the respective departmental workplans, as well as RMOW corporate strategic planning and budgeting processes.

Implementation efforts will include ongoing interdepartmental meetings with the climate action implementation project managers or teams to review implementation progress and to establish course corrections if required.

Regular reviews of the RMOW climate workplan and regular reporting on progress indicators (for example annual transit ridership, EV registrations in Whistler, new buildings built at each step of the BC Energy Step Code, number of heat pump incentives accessed, or tons of waste to the landfill) in addition to action progress will ensure we are continually moving towards achieving the targets outlined in this plan.

The following initiatives have been established to ensure successful implementation of the Big Moves CAIP:

- **RMOW-wide internal workplan:** A comprehensive, detailed, organization-wide workplan to facilitate CAIP implementation at the action level, which includes budgets, timelines and lead departments for specific projects and programs. The Climate Action Coordinator will engage regularly with program managers to support implementation and to ensure alignment with the RMOW climate goals and other departments.
- **Progress indicators:** Progress towards achieving the Big Moves goals will be tracked with a set of specific key performance indicators and targets for each Big Move. A small but relevant number of indicators was chosen to facilitate informative yet practical reporting that allows continuity without extensive staff time requirements.
- **Semi-annual reports:** Update reports to Council and the public will shift from quarterly CECAP progress reporting to semi-annual Big Moves CAIP reporting which will more clearly illustrate Whistler's progress on climate action and help keep Whistler on track to meeting our climate commitments. The RMOW's annual Energy and GHG Inventory Report was updated to serve as the main Big Moves monitoring tool, and to highlight the main achievements towards each Big Move and Adaptation Goals, in addition to community GHG and energy performance. A less formal progress update on each Big Move will be presented in the winter.
- **Accountability:** One of the main goals and strengths of this Big Moves CAIP is that climate action and climate considerations are embedded into municipal decision making in alignment with the OCP Goal 10.1.

- RMOW Climate Innovation Working Group: The RMOW internal staff working group will continue to facilitate communication, collaboration and shared efficiencies between departments on initiatives that support CAIP implementation;
- RMOW Corporate GHG Emission Reduction Plan: The RMOW Carbon Neutral Operations Plan will be updated to align RMOW action with the Big Moves CAIP and demonstrate RMOW leadership.

### **What happened to the CECAP Actions?**

If approved by Council, the Big Moves CAIP will replace the 2016 CECAP as the guiding climate action implementation plan for Whistler. During the process of consolidating the plans, all CECAP actions have been evaluated to be either integrated into the Big Moves CAIP, completed, or will not be advanced. Of the 134 actions in the CECAP, 101 are integrated into the Big Moves CAIP, 17 are completed, and 16 will not be advanced. A complete list of all CECAP actions and their status can be found in Appendix B which provides the following detail:

- Status: Integrated into Big Moves CAIP, completed, not advanced
- For CECAP actions that are integrated, the Big Move/Adaptation Goal and Key Initiative they have been consolidated into is provided.
- For CECAP actions that are not being advanced, a rationale for the decision is provided.

The Big Moves CAIP is Whistler's latest effort to advance progress towards our climate goals. Combining core initiatives from the CECAP and Whistler's Big Moves Strategy with a focus on our top priorities, this will serve as Whistler's climate action map as we strive towards our goal of being a low carbon resilient community.

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## **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

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

The CECAP was adopted by Council in 2016 and has since guided RMOW's approach to climate action. The Big Moves Strategy was adopted by Council on December 15, 2020. The consolidated Big Moves CAIP presented here integrates the prioritized directions of the Big Moves Strategy and the relevant objectives and actions from the CECAP to provide a prioritized and implementation-focused path forward to meeting Whistler's climate goals. The Big Moves CAIP builds on and integrates the relevant work of the 2016 CECAP, the 2020 Big Moves Strategy and supports the OCP.

Regular public reporting on climate initiatives is a commitment of the Whistler OCP, the CECAP and our Council-adopted commitments within the BC Climate Action Charter. The newly proposed semi-annual reporting structure of the Big Moves CAIP will satisfy this commitment while reducing staff time and effort.

### **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

### Corporate Goals

- Community character and mountain culture is reflected in municipal initiatives
- Municipal decision-making supports the effective stewardship of natural assets and ecological function
- Corporate policies and operations ensure continuous excellence in infrastructure, facility and program management
- A high level of accountability, transparency and community engagement is maintained
- Corporate financial health is optimized to ensure long-term community success
- A vibrant local economy and safe, resilient resort community is effectively reinforced by organizational activities
- Pandemic recovery

### Community Vision and Official Community Plan

The 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.

The CAIP and all associated climate action work aims to reduce GHG emissions and increase Whistler's resilience to the impacts of climate change. This work is in full alignment with Whistler's Vision.

### OCP Goals, Objectives and Policies

The Big Moves Integrated CAIP speaks to multiple goals, objectives and policies within the OCP, including but not limited to the following:

**4.1. Goal** – Land use and development are effectively managed to maintain Whistler’s unique sense of place, protect Whistler’s natural environment, provide a high quality of life for residents and provide exceptional experiences for our visitors.

**5.4. Goal** – Reduce the environmental and energy impacts of residential neighbourhoods to improve the quality of life and sustainability of the resort community.

**5.8. Goal** – Achieve a sustainable community forest, balancing forest harvesting, recreation, visual management, watershed protection, the Squamish Nation and Lil’wat Nation cultural values, and community and environmental values in the Cheakamus Community Forest.

**6.1. Goal** – Provide effective and appropriate municipal infrastructure (including facilities and amenities) that minimizes taxpayer costs, and consider allocating the value of infrastructure replacement to future users.

**6.5. Goal** – Support sustainable diversification compatible with the tourism economy.

**7.1. Goal** – Whistler’s sensitive ecosystems, wildlife, habitat and biodiversity are protected, managed and restored.

**7.2. Goal** – Natural areas are proactively managed for and resilient to climate change.

**7.3. Goal** – Water quality and quantity in local water bodies, streams and groundwater are protected.

**7.4. Goal** – Air quality is protected.

**8.6. Goal** – Create and embed effective governance mechanisms and partnerships to create trust, responsibility and accountability.

**8.7. Goal** – Ensure Whistler is a safe and secure resort community.

**8.8. Goal** – Ensure Whistler is an inclusive and accessible resort community.

**8.14. Goal** – Water is used efficiently and that water quality is protected throughout Whistler’s food system.

**8.16. Goal** – Reduce waste from the food system and divert waste from landfills.

**9.2. Goal** – Support and enhance the growth and vitality of Whistler’s ANH sector, including fostering conditions that enable Whistler’s ANH sector workers to live and work in the resort community.

**9.3. Goal** – Continually reaffirm our sense of place as the foundation to Whistler’s recreation and leisure experience.

**9.4. Goal** – Achieve a balance between user needs, the natural environment and user experiences in providing recreational opportunities.

**10.1. Goal** – Municipal decision-making is well-structured to achieve energy efficiency goals and GHG reduction targets.

**10.2. Goal** – Substantially reduce GHG emissions from vehicles and transportation.



**10.3. Goal** – Substantially reduce GHG emissions from buildings and infrastructure.

**10.4. Goal** – Substantially reduce GHG emissions associated with solid waste management.

**10.5. Goal** – Increase the resilience of Whistler’s infrastructure, natural environment and socio-economic assets from the potential impacts of a changing climate.

**11.1. Goal** – Provide a quality travel experience for all visitors, employees and residents, and promote a culture of safety and accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

**11.2. Goal** – Integrate the transportation system with land use planning to minimize the need for travel by motor vehicle.

**11.3. Goal** – Minimize GHG emissions created by the transportation system.

**11.4. Goal** – Support the increased use of preferred modes of transportation for all travel purposes to reduce dependence on private motor vehicles.

**11.6. Goal** – Ensure the resiliency of Whistler’s transportation system by providing viable alternative road, railway, water and air transport routes to, from and within the resort community.

**11.7. Goal** – Ensure the transportation system respects Whistler’s natural environment, minimizes climate impacts and improves the livability of the resort community.

**12.1. Goal** – Whistler provides safe drinking water and reliable water supplies for residential, commercial and fire protection needs in a manner that is cost-effective, maintains reliable infrastructure and uses conservation to minimize environmental impacts.

**12.3. Goal** – Move progressively toward zero waste.

**12.4. Goal** – Ensure Whistler is adequately serviced with telecommunications and energy services in a way that minimizes environmental and resort community impacts.

**12.5. Goal** – Whistler’s drainage systems meet all applicable standards and replicate natural systems, as much as possible. Whistler’s drainage systems ensure the safety and protection of people, property and infrastructure from floods, and are maintained in a cost-effective, reliable manner that minimizes or eliminates environmental impacts.

### **Other Relevant Policies**

The Big Moves CAIP aims to inform and/or support many other municipal policies, including but not limited to:

- 2016 CECAP
- 2020 Big Moves Strategy
- Green Building Policy
- Transportation Action Plan
- Active Transportation Plan
- Solid Waste Management Strategy

## BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Implementing all climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives outlined in the Big Moves CAIP plan will require investments by the RMOW and all local climate action stakeholders such as residents, businesses, institutions, and developers. These investments in addition to supporting climate mitigation and adaptation will realize co-benefits and will serve to strengthen our local economy and our community.

Some cost for work towards implementing our climate goals are easier to predict in the short term (e.g. installation of new EV charger infrastructure, financial incentives for building retrofits, climate outreach and education activities) and are part of the RMOW 5-year financial plan and workplans of the respective responsible RMOW departments.

Estimating the cost of long-term actions however, will rely on in-depth analysis of complexities (e.g. infrastructure improvements, restoring local natural habitat), innovation in technology (e.g. low carbon materials), collaboration within the RMOW and with other municipalities, and evolving legislation at all levels of government. While these long-term actions have the potential to achieve deeper and long lasting GHG emission reductions and are necessary to achieve our climate goals, cost estimates are difficult to project beyond the RMOW 5 year financial plan or out to 2030.

Economic considerations and high level cost estimates for work towards implementing the Big Moves and Adaptation Goals are included throughout the Big Moves CAIP. These considerations and cost estimates were developed in collaboration with the responsible RMOW departments and are part of their respective 5-year financial and work plans. All economic considerations and cost estimations in this plan are for 5 years of work towards implementation, are high-level, and based on current-day knowledge without specifying funding sources or staff time implications. Through the municipal budget process, business cases will be prepared for specific actions at the time of implementation, which will provide an opportunity to evaluate these with the most up-to-date costs, resource requirements, available grants, projected results and other identified funding sources. A long-term, flexible, dynamic perspective will be necessary to ensure that all RMOW spending today aligns with the climate goals outlined in this plan and helps lower the cost of reducing emissions and adapting to climate change in the future.

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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.

A draft of the final Big Moves CAIP was shared with the Squamish Nation and the Lil'wat Nation. Both the Squamish Nation and Lil'wat Nation will be informed about the final CAIP and will be invited to partner on relevant actions.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

Inform     Consult     Involve     Collaborate     Empower

Comment(s):

The Big Moves CAIP represents a consolidation of existing work, namely the CECAP and the Big Moves Strategy. Development of the 2016 CECAP involved public collaboration in the form of open houses and a specifically-formed Community Advisory Group. The Big Moves Strategy that was adopted by Council in 2020 involved expert and public engagement initiatives. As such, the Big Moves CAIP reflects the input and feedback received by key stakeholders, subject-matter experts and residents.

The Big Moves CAIP has a strong focus on implementation that is clear and actionable by the RMOW. While this plan focuses mainly on actions the RMOW can take independently, climate change affects our entire community and collaboration with key partners, stakeholders, and our community is fundamental in achieving our climate goals. All Key Initiatives in this plan that involve collaboration with community stakeholders and partners will include thorough engagement and discussion to advance each action and associated work plan items. Where beneficial, committees and working groups will be consulted and/or established to guide implementation efforts and ensure strategic alignment towards achieving our community-wide climate goals.

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## REFERENCES

Appendix A – 2022 Big Moves Climate Action Implementation Plan  
Appendix B - CECAP / Big Moves CAIP Integration Record

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## SUMMARY

The Big Moves CAIP is a consolidation of existing work, namely the 2016 CECAP and the 2020 Big Moves Strategy, with a focus on implementation. The Big Moves CAIP will guide the overall prioritization and implementation of actions to move Whistler towards achieving our climate goals of reducing GHG emissions by 50% below 2007 levels by 2030 and increasing Whistler's resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The integrated Big Moves CAIP will result in clearer and more informative climate reporting against specific targets and indicators. Updates to Council and the public will shift from quarterly CECAP progress reports to semi-annual Big Moves CAIP reports which will more clearly illustrate Whistler's progress on climate action and help keep Whistler on track to meeting our climate commitments.

**SIGN-OFFS**

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