

**RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER**

4325 Blackcomb Way
Whistler, BC Canada V8E 0X5
whistler.ca

TEL 604 932 5535
TF 1 866 932 5535
FAX 604 935 8109

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

PRESENTED: February 21, 2023
FROM: Climate & Environment
SUBJECT: BIG MOVES CLIMATE ACTION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PROGRESS - Q3/Q4 2022

REPORT: 23-019
FILE: 5721

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. 23-019 and the Big Moves Climate Action Implementation Plan Progress - Q3/Q4 2022, attached as Appendix A.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress made towards delivering the Big Moves Climate Action Implementation Plan (Big Moves CAIP) and to highlight achievements and gaps towards our climate goals. The report highlights significant milestones achieved in Q3 and Q4 of 2022 towards the six Big Moves and three Adaptation goals as outlined in the 2022 Big Moves CAIP. The report also highlights Key Initiatives that require enhanced effort to reach our climate goals.

☒ Information Report

☐ Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

DISCUSSION

Background

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 the weather has heightened awareness about Whistler's shared responsibility to manage our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—and the potential impacts on our community and our economy if we do not.

On [August 2, 2022](#), Council adopted the strategically prioritized and action-focused Big Moves CAIP, as the new guiding organization-wide implementation plan for Whistler's action on climate change. The Big Moves CAIP builds on the Resort Municipality of Whistler's (RMOW) previous climate work as it consolidates the detailed complexity of the 2016 Community Energy and Climate Action Plan (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. Climate action is a priority for our community and the RMOW as outlined in the Corporate Plan Update - Post Strategic Planning Retreat presentation that was presented to Council on January 24, 2023. The RMOW Corporate Plan emphasizes the importance of prioritizing municipal resources to support our Big Moves CAIP.

As part of consolidating the 2016 CECAP and the 2020 Big Moves Strategy, an updated reporting structure towards achieving Whistler's climate goals was adopted. As such, climate action progress reports to Council and the public have shifted from quarterly CECAP progress reporting to semi-annual Big Moves CAIP reporting which aim to more clearly illustrate Whistler's progress on climate action. This report is the first of these semi-annual reports and is focused on qualitative updates on the actions outlined in the Big Moves CAIP. In Q3 of this year, staff will bring forward the Annual Climate Action Report, which will include the annual energy and GHG inventory along with an updated status on Whistler's climate performance indicators and qualitative updates on the Big Moves CAIP actions.

Regular reports on community and corporate energy use and GHG emissions performance have been published annually since 2013 and semi-annually since 2010 and continue to be part of Whistler's commitment under Whistler's Official Community Plan, the Big Moves CAIP, the BC Climate Action Charter, as well as the Provincial Local Government Climate Action Program.

Analysis

Big Moves Mitigation Progress Highlights

This section outlines action highlights for each Big Move in which a significant milestone was achieved in Q3 or Q4 of 2022. This section also identifies Key Initiatives that require enhanced effort to achieve our climate goals.

A comprehensive list of all actions to support progress towards achieving Whistler's Big Moves goals as outlined in the Big Moves CAIP be found in Appendix A.

Big Move 1 – Move beyond the car:

Goal: By 2030, 50 per cent of all trips in Whistler are by transit and active transport.

Progress Highlights

- BC Transit Future Action Plan with BC Transit adopted by Council Sept 6, 2022.
- Construction on Village Gate Blvd bus shelter accessibility completed in fall 2022.
- New equipment added and new staff hired for Valley Trail winter snow clearing to improve winter service level.
- Roughly 1000 km travelled by Resort Operations team on RMOW e-bikes through RMOW e-bike share program (~240 kgCO₂e of vehicle emissions avoided). Plans are underway to expand the municipal e-bike fleet.
- Community e-bike share pilot program (with Evo) completed successfully from August-October 2022. On Jan 10, 2023, Council approved the issuance of an RFP for a full community e-bike share program for the 2023 summer season.

Areas for Enhanced Effort

Given the recent staffing challenges of BC Transit, the shift to late winter season schedule as per [Administrative Report 23-005](#) on January 24, 2023, and the increased vehicle congestion during peak times indicating an increase in vehicle trips in Whistler, it is increasingly important to prioritize actions related to providing efficient and affordable transit to achieve the goal of 50 per cent of all trips made by transit and active transport. It is also essential that regional transit is established with neighbouring communities. See related Key Initiatives below.

- Key Initiative 1.1: Increase public transport use by keeping fares affordable, service frequent and efficient, finalize and implement the BC Transit Future Action Plan (BC TFAP).
- Key Initiative 1.2: Shorten trip times through phased implementation of actions and infrastructure improvements such as queue jumper, bus acceleration lanes, and dedicated bus lanes.
- Key Initiative 1.3: Engage with the Provincial government and continue to collaborate with neighbouring communities on efficient and affordable regional transit.

Big Move 2 – Decarbonize passenger and commercial transportation:

Goal: By 2030, 50 per cent of all vehicle km travelled are from zero-emission vehicles.

Progress Highlights

- RMOW Fleet assessment completed in August 2022. Next step is to carry out the procurement plan outlined in the fleet assessment and complete a zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) Infrastructure Assessment to support the fleet transition. The infrastructure assessment will evaluate electrical capacity, electrical modifications, utility billing impacts and upfront costs so we can successfully accommodate the fleet transition.
- New electric ice resurfacer acquired for Olympic Plaza replacing a diesel burning tractor with a tow-behind ice resurfacer.
- Electrified 60 per cent of hand tools in Parks Operations. Largest impact was the replacement of 4-stroke mowers with two electric mowers.
- Emotive funding was received in Q2 2022 to support the shift to an electric vehicle (EV) for residents in stratas via education and outreach on EV charger installations in collaboration with the District of Squamish.
 - Webinar held in collaboration with the District of Squamish on Oct 26, 2022, on EV charging for apartments and condos. 65 people attended the webinar.
 - [Guide to EV charging for apartments and condos](#) published on the RMOW website.
- BC Transit has requested to pilot the use of electric buses in Whistler. Concerns with proposed buses being too large were raised and will be brought forward to the Transit Management Advisory Committee (TMAC) for further discussion.
- In support of Key Initiative 2.7 (to strategically increase parking costs to discourage the use of single occupancy vehicles) the Day Lot Operating Committee revised hourly Day Lot parking rates over the summer. Council adopted the report to remove free Day Lot parking from Lot 4 and 5 on January 24, 2023. Day Lot Operating Committee approved the removal of free Day Lot parking in Lot 4 and 5, effective April 15, 2023.

Areas for Enhanced Effort

Passenger vehicle transport is Whistler's largest source of emissions, accounting for 52 per cent of Whistler's community wide emissions in 2021. To achieve our goal of increasing zero-emission vehicle kilometers to 50 per cent of all vehicle kilometers travelled, it is important to increase access to

charging at home, expand the public charging network and lead by example with the RMOW fleet. Stratas and multi-unit residential buildings present additional challenges for access to charging and require enhanced effort to remove barriers. See related Key Initiatives below:

- Key Initiative 2.2: Incentivize residential (single-family and multi-unit) building EV charging installations by providing top-ups to provincial incentives or by adopting ZEV-ready building requirements.
- Key Initiative 2.3: Electrify private and public fleets to take on a leadership role and establish Whistler as an EV-friendly community.

Big Move 3 – Reduce visitor travel emissions:

Goal: By 2030, Whistler demonstrates leadership in redefining tourism in a low carbon world.

Highlights

- Whistler 101 “Climate Change” episode was filmed in Q4 2022, and the highly anticipated release is planned for Q1 2023.

Areas for Enhanced Effort

Achieving significant GHG emissions reductions related to tourism presents challenges for the tourism industry and the RMOW. Our Key Initiatives related to this Big Move are high level so we can start conversations and partnerships to inform stronger next steps. More emphasis and partnership alignment on how climate action would support a more climate resilient future of our resort and economic opportunities is needed.

While we estimate that emissions associated with visitor travel are significantly larger than Whistler’s community emissions, a recommended first step is to quantify these emissions. Therefore, enhanced effort is needed to better understand these emissions so we can make more informed decisions related to defining low carbon tourism. See related Key Initiative below:

- Key Initiative 3.1: Partner with the tourism and outdoor recreation sectors to define tourism and outdoor recreation in the future low-carbon world and to show leadership in facilitating and marketing a low-carbon vacation destination.

Big Move 4 – Build zero emission buildings:

Goal: By 2030, all new buildings achieve the top step in B.C.’s Energy Step Code, use only low carbon heating systems, and embodied carbon emissions drop by 40 per cent.

Progress Highlights

- Green Building Policy adopted by Council on December 6, 2022, which incorporates climate action considerations for rezoning applications, including:
 - Wording related to the adoption of RMOW Step Code Policy
 - Criteria from B.C. Transportation Action Plan
 - E-bike charger requirements
 - EV readiness requirements informed by RMOW EV Strategy
 - Outdoor swimming pool heating requirements
 - Guidance on material selection and associated guidelines
 - Requirements of Life Cycle Assessments

- [Embodied Carbon Guide](#) completed by RMOW with Community Energy Association (CEA) and published on RMOW website. Following this project, the B.C. Embodied Carbon Peer Network was created and RMOW is a participant in these sessions.

Areas for Enhanced Effort

Our role in achieving this goal is through policy and in leading by example. Our policies require enhanced effort to make significant strides on our actions. Specifically, adopting higher steps of the B.C. Energy Step Code and including climate action initiatives related to building materials, construction waste and fuel consumption in our procurement policy.

The adoption of Step Code for Part 3 buildings and adoption of higher steps of the Step Code for Part 9 buildings is delayed. The Provincial Government has delayed the release of Municipal Pathways for adoption of GHG Intensity (GHGI) metrics, delaying the RMOW's intended timeline as per report to Council on June 6, 2022. Action will be taken by the RMOW to adopt these pathways once they are released by the Provincial Government. See related Key Initiatives below:

- Key Initiative 4.1: Adopt progressively higher steps on the B.C. Energy Step Code to address new building envelope improvements and regulate GHG emissions from new buildings by either incentivizing low carbon energy systems or by adopting the Province's GHG targets within the buildings code.
- Key Initiative 4.3: Promote capacity building opportunities and develop outreach campaigns for step code and low carbon energy systems for the building industry, home buyers, and realtors.
- Key Initiative 4.8: Streamline the municipal building permit process to minimize administrative burden for property owners, developers and RMOW staff as relates to additional GHG related tasks and requirements.

Big Move 5 – Make existing buildings better:

Goal: By 2030, reduce emissions from residential buildings by 20 per cent and from large commercial buildings by 40 per cent.

Highlights

- The Retrofit Assist program was launched in May 2022 and is ongoing:
 - 19 applications total (3 active applications and 14 ineligible applications)
 - Preliminary discussions with the CEA and District of Squamish are underway for options to increase uptake (e.g., expansion of retrofit scope to include those that are ineligible for heat pumps)
- CEA Community of Practice grant received to develop Whistler hotel engagement plan for low carbon retrofits. Plan developed in Q4 2022, implementation to take place in 2023.

Areas for Enhanced Effort

While initiatives are underway to support adoption of low-carbon retrofits for residential buildings, addressing emissions from large commercial buildings (e.g., hotels) has proven to be challenging given the complex nature of ownership, stratas and multi-stakeholder groups. Enhanced effort is needed to reduce emissions from large commercial buildings by 40 per cent by 2030. See related Key Initiatives below:

- Key Initiative 5.6: Work with operators and managers of larger commercial buildings (especially hotels) to advance this Big Move in their building(s) by sharing information on best practices and benchmarking.

- Key Initiative 5.7: Support strata residents, councils, and property management companies to implement energy efficiency and low carbon heating system retrofits.

Big Move 6 – Close the loop and shift toward lower carbon consumption:

Goal: By 2030, reduce waste sector emissions by 95 per cent and reduce embodied emissions from products and services.

Highlights

- RMOW waste transfer station design is underway with construction planned for 2024.
- Pilot project launched to work with two Vancouver based deconstruction companies, Unbuilders and TM Builders to better understand deconstruction as it relates to a demolition waste bylaw and deconstruction waste bylaw.

Areas for Enhanced Effort

While we have made great progress towards reducing waste sector emissions, to reach our goal of reducing emissions by 95 per cent, Whistler needs to consider our approach to a circular economy. Enhanced effort is needed to define circular economy in Whistler. See related Key Initiative below:

- Key Initiative 6.5: Engage with residents, visitors and local businesses to advance sustainable consumption, to support locally reusable products and packaging, a local shared economy, and other local carbon reduction projects.

Adaptation Progress Highlights

This section outlines action highlights for each Adaptation goal in which a significant milestone was achieved in Q3 or Q4 of 2022. This section also identifies Key Initiatives that require enhanced effort to achieve our goals.

A comprehensive list of all actions to support progress towards achieving Whistler's Adaptation goals as outlined in the Big Moves CAIP be found in Appendix A.

Adaptation Goal 1 – Minimize threats from wildfires:

A progress report toward implementing the Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan was brought to Council on January 24, 2023.

Progress Highlights

- [Consolidated Fire & Life Safety Bylaw 2201, 2019](#) amended by Council on December 20, 2022.
- Wildfire Mitigation Specialist training was delivered to Whistler Fire Protection staff in 2022 with plans for continued training in 2023.
- FireSmart programs are ongoing, with increased staff resources.
- High priority fuel treatment areas completed in 2022 include Taluswood, Rainbow 2 and Kadenwood Gondola (partially completed).
- Grant funding of \$10,132,250 was received from the Federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund which provides long-term secured funding to significantly reduce the wildfire risk in twelve high priority areas within Whistler's wildland urban interface (WUI). The work will be conducted over the next ten years.

Areas for Enhanced Effort

Wildfires have been identified as the highest climate change related risk and vulnerability for Whistler. While the RMOW has been actively working to reduce the risk of wildfire in the community for over 15 years, further alignment between all wildfire related stakeholders within the RMOW and in the Sea to Sky region will be necessary to maximize all available resources and increase the impact of all actions towards mitigating this risk. See related Key Initiative below:

- Key Initiative A1.1: Implement the Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP) in collaboration with relevant partners.

Adaptation Goal 2 – Increase resilience to extreme weather events:

Progress Highlights

- Awarded heat mapping grant from UBCM in the amount of \$30,000. The grant funding will be used to develop a heat response plan.
- Misting stations installed in Olympic Plaza and Lost Lake PassivHaus.

Areas for Enhanced Effort

Recent climate change projections for Whistler showed that escalations in the frequency and intensity of heavy rain events can be expected. Increasing the resilience of our built environment will be necessary to withstand related risks such as flooding, debris flows and storm water overflows. Therefore, efforts need to be prioritized to integrate the latest climate change projections into all stormwater and flood hazard related plans as well as corporate asset management planning. See related Key Initiatives below:

- Key Initiative A2.1: Review and improve stormwater management plans to ensure capacity and resilience in consideration of anticipated climate changes.
- Key Initiative A2.2: Update flood hazard plans in consideration of anticipated climate changes, such as storm frequency and intensity.
- Key Initiative A2.7: Integrate climate change considerations into the corporate asset management system.

Adaptation Goal 3 – Protect local ecosystems and biodiversity:

Progress Highlights

- Council adopted Council Policy F-34 Rodenticide Use in Municipal Properties on October 4, 2022, to reduce unnecessary suffering of wildlife and pets and reduces the presence of toxic substances in and around municipal property.
- Environmental considerations were integrated into the following initiatives:
 - Environmental Suitability Guidelines for the Recreational Trails Strategy
 - Disc Golf Strategy
 - Rainbow Park Rejuvenation project
 - Meadow Park Rejuvenation project
- Cheakamus Community Forest hired a new Executive Director, Heather Beresford, who will report to the Forestry and Wildlife Advisory Committee (FWAC).
- Received annual Ecosystems & Species Monitoring program report for 2022. Results will be shared with Council in Q3 2023.
- Ongoing Invasive Species Management Plan implementation and improved collaboration with the Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council (SSISC). New fee for service agreement established for 2023, allowing for more significant efforts around community education, staff training and invasive species monitoring, treatment and removal.

Areas for Enhanced Effort

Ecosystems are being impacted and are changing in response to climate change. To date, climate change has had a relatively modest effect on ecosystems and biodiversity, compared to the impacts of human activity. However, this is already shifting, and the negative ecological impacts of climate change are becoming more apparent. As a resort community, a healthy natural environment is the basis of Whistler's economic success and community wellbeing. Enhanced efforts are needed to preserve our most valuable natural areas and to integrate future climate considerations into all RMOW planning processes. See relevant Key Initiative below:

- Key Initiative A3.5: Support environmental integration and education opportunities.
 - Integrate the RMOW's climate goals/targets into the Corporate Plan and subsequent Departmental work plans, budgets and individual PDPs

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions

Regular public reporting of both community and corporate GHG emissions is a commitment of the Whistler Official Community Plan (OCP), the Big Moves CAIP, the RMOW Carbon Neutral Operations Plan, and our Council-adopted commitments within the BC Climate Action Charter.

The Big Moves CAIP is a consolidation of the 2016 CECAP and the 2020 Climate Action Big Moves strategy including the 2030 target to reduce Whistler's GHG emissions by 50 per cent below 2007 levels. The Big Moves CAIP supports the OCP.

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

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 consolidated Big Moves CAIP aims to streamline climate action planning, reporting and to advance climate action mitigation and adaptation and is therefore particularly strongly aligned with the OCP Goals listed below and all associated Objectives and Policies included within the Natural Environment Chapter 7, the Climate Action and Energy Chapter 10, and the Transportation Chapter 11 of the current OCP.

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 CCF.

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.

8.14. 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.

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

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.

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

12.3 Goal - Move progressively toward zero waste.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The tracking and reporting of the Big Moves CAIP Key Initiatives and actions does not have direct budget implications beyond the dedication of staff time. However, the actions themselves may have different budgeting requirements. Part of this process is to remind each department to account for any budgetary considerations of these actions as part of their annual budgeting process and longer-term forecasting.

LÍŁWAT NATION & SQUAMISH NATION CONSIDERATIONS

The RMOW is committed to working with the Lílwat 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.

There is no direct intersection between the Big Moves CAIP reporting and the Lílwat People and the Squamish People. Opportunities to identify mutual climate objectives, to collaborate and build relationships with Lílwat People and Squamish People through climate action will be a fundamental part of climate mitigation and adaptation going forward.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

☒ Inform ☐ Consult ☐ Involve ☐ Collaborate ☐ Empower

REFERENCES

Appendix A – Climate Action Implementation Plan Progress Report - Q3/Q4 2022

SUMMARY

This report is the first semi-annual Big Moves CAIP progress report, replacing previous quarterly CECAP reporting. This report provides action highlights of Whistler's main achievements in Q3 and Q4 2022 towards each Big Move and Adaptation Goal as outlined in the 2022 Big Moves CAIP. These highlights demonstrate that progress has been made in various key areas. However, Whistler is not currently on track to achieve the 2030 GHG emissions reduction target of 50 per cent reduction below 2007 levels. Numerous Key Initiatives will require enhanced efforts and clear guidance from Council to get Whistler back on track towards achieving all goals outlined in the Big Moves CAIP.

SIGN-OFFS

Written by:

Maria Thorlakson,
Climate Action Coordinator

Reviewed by:

Luisa Burhenne,
Manager of Climate & Environment

Martin Pardoe,
Acting General Manager of Resort Experience

Virginia Cullen,
Chief Administrative Officer