



**RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER**

4325 Blackcomb Way TEL 604 932 5535  
Whistler, BC Canada V8E 0X5 TF 1 866 932 5535  
whistler.ca FAX 604 935 8109

## STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

**PRESENTED:** March 27, 2023 **REPORT:** 23-037  
**FROM:** Planning Department **FILE:** 3060-20-1926  
**SUBJECT:** DP001926 – FITZSIMMONS 8 LIFT REPLACEMENT

### RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**That** the recommendation of the Director of Planning be endorsed.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

**That** Council authorize the Director of Planning to issue Development Permit DP001926 to authorize construction of a new high-speed 8 passenger lift to replace the existing Fitzsimmons Lift, with permit terms and conditions as follows:

1. The development shall be completed in accordance with the Development Plans, Supporting Infrastructure Plan, Base Terminal Grading, Cut and Fill Plan, Construction Management Plan, Base Terminal Landscape Plan, and Exterior Lighting Details, attached as Appendices C through H to this Administrative Report 23-037;
2. The development shall be completed in accordance with Memorandum titled “Fitzsimmons 8 Proposed measures of Dust and Erosion Mitigation” prepared by Whistler Blackcomb dated February 21, 2023, attached as Appendix I to this Administrative Report 23-037;
3. Upon completion of the base station installation and operator enclosure, at the earliest opportunity, the adjacent area shall be re-seeded and rehabilitated in accordance with Base Terminal Landscape Plan labelled L1 prepared by Driven by Nature dated March 6, 2023, attached as Appendix G to this Administrative Report 23-037, with the following requirements:
  - minimum 200 millimeters of topsoil depth shall be provided for the adjacent area and the re-seeding mix shall be made of the following species of perennials as available:
    - Perennial Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*)
    - Blue Flax (*Linum lewisii*)
    - Lance Leaved Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)
    - Sweet William (*Dianthus barbatus*)
    - Siberian Wallflower (*Cheiranthus allionii*)
    - Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
    - Blanketflower (*Gaillardia aristata*).
4. A landscape security in the amount of \$145,800.00 shall be provided to ensure that the hard and soft landscaping works are carried out consistently with the terms and conditions of the

Development Permit, with security to be administered in accordance with Council Policy G-9: Landscape Security for Development Permit; and further

**That** issuance of Development Permit DP001926 is subject to prior adoption of “Zoning and Parking Amendment Bylaw (Fitzsimmons 8 Lift) No. 2399, 2023”.

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report seeks Council’s consideration to approve the issuance of Development Permit DP001926 (DP001926) authorizing proposed construction of a new lift base station, as a component of the replacement of the existing Fitzsimmons Lift with a new high-speed, 8-passenger chairlift (Fitzsimmons 8 Lift) to increase upload capacity during winter and summer resort operations.

A development permit is required for the base station terminal, operator enclosure and associated site alterations, as the lift base station area falls within the Whistler Village Development Permit Area (DPA). Analysis has determined that the proposal is consistent with the relevant DPA guidelines.

The issuance of DP001926 is subject to receiving the landscape security for the project and adoption of “Zoning and Parking Amendment Bylaw (Fitzsimmons 8 Lift) No. 2399, 2023” and the development must be completed in accordance with the referenced plans and conditions.

Information Report

Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Background**

The Fitzsimmons 8 Lift replacement contemplates replacement of the lift base station and operator enclosure, plus replacement of 19 lift towers and the top station. The DP001926 applies only to the lift base area, as the remainder of the lift replacement project is exempt from requiring a development permit. This report and supporting documents address only the base area components of the Fitzsimmons 8 Lift replacement project.

Whistler Blackcomb (WB) advises that the purpose of the lift replacement is to improve wait times and increase uphill capacity in winter and summer operations. The new Fitzsimmons 8 Lift will increase upload capacity from 1,850 to 3,300 passengers per hour. Currently, during summer operations, utilization of the existing Fitzsimmons Lift is inefficient, requiring every second lift as a mountain bike carrier with no passengers. Loading and unloading challenges cause frequent slowdowns and stops. The new Fitzsimmons 8 Lift will be equipped with updated bicycle carriers allowing for up to five bikes and five riders per chair, increasing the existing uphill bike capacity and reducing the frequency of slowdowns and stops.

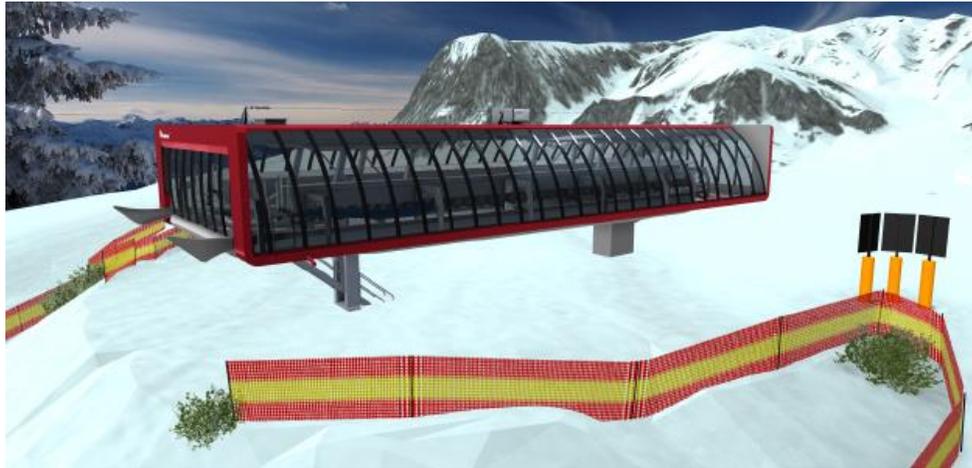
**Figure 1: Fitzsimmons lift base area**



### **Analysis**

The proposed development plans are provided in Appendices A through I. The base station for the Fitzsimmons 8 Lift will be built on the footprint of the existing lift base station, requiring a slightly larger footprint to accommodate a larger base terminal and skier/cyclist circulation and queuing. The new base terminal measures 22.99 metres long by 12.3 metres wide, compared to the existing base terminal which measures 18 metres long by 7.5 metres wide. The height will remain the same at 7.3 metres. The canopy of the base terminal includes a red frame surrounding clear glazing, overtop of a black frame structure with grey highlights.

**Figure 2: Illustrative Image of Proposed Lift Terminal**



The current operator enclosure (control room adjacent to the base terminal), located on the east side of the Fitzsimmons Lift, will be replaced and relocated to the west side of the terminal (on the Skier's Plaza side). The new operator enclosure will be clad with natural wood siding, similar to the operator enclosures at the Creekside Gondola and Big Red Express chairlift.

Site plans show that the lift base area is large enough to accommodate the proposed base terminal, operator enclosure, maze area, and skier/biker circulation.

The design proposes decals with the name of the lift on the terminal roofline. All proposed signs will require a sign permit and will be reviewed for consistency with Sign Bylaw No. 558, 1987.

Exterior lighting is directed downwards to avoid light pollution, and bulb types are selected for a warm colour temperature.

At the site scale, existing grades within Skier's Plaza will remain the same and the area will be re-seeded and rehabilitated after construction. The area impacted by construction will be remediated by 200 millimetre (8 inches) of topsoil and re-seeded with a perennial wildflower mix. The native wildflower mix will support pollinator species, improve dust and erosion control, and improve the quality of the base area in summer months. The selected plant species do not include bear attractant plants (e.g. clover) in the seed mix. These requirements are included as conditions in the recommendations by staff.

The applicant has engaged Sartori Environmental Consultants to ensure that the proposed development is consistent with environmental guidelines in relevant legislation, consistent with the requirements of the Master Development Agreement for WB approved by the Province of British Columbia.

A project phasing plan has been provided, anticipating that site preparation will commence in March 2023 and commissioning and finalization will occur in November 2023, prior to the 2023-2024 ski season. Project phasing accounts for summer operation of the Bike Park, and accommodates Crankworx, scheduled for July 2023.

The applicant has also provided a construction dust and erosion mitigation plan (attached as Appendix I) to ensure that installation of the new lift base station will not impact visitor experience in the adjacent Skier's Plaza during construction.

The proposal has been evaluated relative to the applicable Whistler Village DPA guidelines and is considered to be consistent with the guidelines as demonstrated in Appendix A.

#### Analysis of Compliance with Zoning and Parking Bylaw No. 303, 2015

The subject lands are zoned RR1 (Rural Resource One). The proposal is in compliance with all regulations of the RR1 zone and Zoning and Parking Bylaw No. 303, 2015 (the Zoning and Parking Bylaw) except for the parking requirement.

The Zoning and Parking Bylaw has a parking requirement that is defined at 0.50 parking spaces per hourly rated capacity of all base lifts. The proposed change in hourly rated capacity between the existing Fitzsimmons Lift (1,850) and the planned Fitzsimmons 8 Lift (3,300) results in a change in required parking space capacity of 725 spaces (1,450 x 0.50)

"Zoning and Parking Amendment Bylaw (Fitzsimmons 8 Lift) No. 2399, 2023" under consideration by Council proposes to alter the parking requirements that are associated with proposed hourly rated lift capacity increases to the Fitzsimmons 8 Lift to provide alternate compliance conditions generally related to the provision of new parking studies, contributions to local transit and revenue sharing with any future pay parking schemes on Lots 6, 7, 8 and/or Creekside parking lots.

The issuance of Development Permit DP001926 is subject to prior adoption of "Zoning and Parking Amendment Bylaw (Fitzsimmons 8 Lift) No. 2399, 2023".

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## **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

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

Council has the authority to issue a Development Permit under s.490 of the *Local Government Act*.

Previous Council decisions respecting the Fitzsimmons 8 Lift include:

[March 24, 2023: Administrative Report 23-036](#): Zoning and Parking Amendment Bylaw (Fitzsimmons 8 Lift) No. 2399, 2023

This report presents, "Zoning and Parking Amendment Bylaw (Fitzsimmons 8 Lift) No. 2399, 2023" (Amendment Bylaw) for Council consideration of first, second and third readings. The proposed Amendment Bylaw alters the parking requirements required in the Zoning and Parking Bylaw 303, 2015 (Zoning Bylaw) that are associated with proposed hourly rated lift capacity increases to the Fitzsimmons 8 Lift to provide alternate compliance conditions generally related to the provision of new parking studies, contributions to local transit and revenue sharing with any future pay parking schemes on Lots 6, 7, 8 and/or Creekside parking lots.

### **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 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.

The subject lands are located within the Whistler Village DPA. The applicable guidelines are contained within the OCP. The recommendation in this report is consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the OCP, and in particular as related to the Whistler Village DPA.

Appendix A details how the revised proposal meets the applicable OCP DPA guidelines.

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### BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The application fee for DP001926 accounts for staff time and associated direct costs.

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## LÍLWAT 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.

The applicant confirms they will consult with the Lílwat Nation and the Squamish Nation to determine their interest or preference in incorporating the lift name in each of their respective languages as was done with Creekside Gondola and Big Red Express.

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## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

Inform     Consult     Involve     Collaborate     Empower

Comment(s):

As required a Development Permit notification sign is posted on the property.

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## REFERENCES

Appendix A – OCP DP Guideline Review  
Appendix B – Project Rationale  
Appendix C – Development Plans (Whistler Blackcomb, December 28, 2022)  
Appendix D – Supporting Infrastructure Plan (Whistler Blackcomb, February 20, 2023)  
Appendix E – Terminal Grading Plans (Driven By Nature, March 6, 2023)  
Appendix F – Construction Site Plans (Whistler Blackcomb, January 26, 2023)  
Appendix G – Landscape Plan (Driven By Nature, March 6, 2023)  
Appendix H – Exterior Lighting Plan (Whistler Blackcomb, March 3, 2023)  
Appendix I – Fitzsimmons 8 Proposed Measures of Dust and Erosion Mitigation (February 21, 2023)

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## SUMMARY

DP001926 presents replacement of the existing Fitzsimmons Lift with a new high-speed, 8-passenger lift to increase upload capacity during winter and summer resort operations. A Development Permit is required for the base station terminal, operator enclosure and associated site alterations, as the lift base station falls within the Whistler Village DPA. Analysis has determined that the proposal is consistent with the relevant DPA guidelines.

This report recommends approval of issuance of DP001926 subject to receiving the landscape security for the project, and adoption of "Zoning and Parking Amendment Bylaw (Fitzsimmons 8 Lift) No. 2399, 2023" with the development to be completed in accordance with the specified plans and conditions.

**SIGN-OFFS**

**Written by:**

John Chapman,  
Manager of Planning

**Reviewed by:**

Melissa Laidlaw,  
Manager of Planning

Mike Kirkegaard,  
Director of Planning

Virginia Cullen,  
Chief Administrative Officer