STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

PRESENTED:	September 26, 2023	**REPORT:**	23-100
FROM:	Legislative Services	**FILE:**	0540-01
SUBJECT:	COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL REVIEW PROJECT KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT		

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

That the recommendation of the General Manager of Corporate Services and Public Safety be endorsed.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council endorse the Committee of Council Review Project Key Findings and Recommendations Report, including the staff recommendations for the committee program structure (Recommendation Four), as presented in Appendix A attached to this Administrative Report No. 23-100 and direct staff to prepare a plan to implement the recommendations.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of the Committees of Council Review Project (Committee Project) and present to Council, the Committee of Council Review Project Key Findings and Recommendations Report (Recommendations Report), attached as Appendix A. Staff are seeking endorsement of the Recommendations Report and direction to implement the recommendations aimed at improving the Committees of Council Program (Committee Program) over the coming months.

☐ Information Report   ☒ Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

DISCUSSION

Background

The Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) has an existing Committee Program consisting of 20 Select and Standing Committees and two Boards that engage approximately 145 representatives from the community, partner organizations, Council, and staff. Committees cover a broad range of municipal areas of interest and provide an advisory role to Council. Staff, in consultation with the Governance and Ethics Committee of Council (GAESC) have undertaken a review of the 20 Standing and Select Committees in the Committee Program. Committees utilize important Council, staff, and community resources and, as a result, there is a desire to ensure this resource commitment is aligned with the value committees provide. The Committee Project is an opportunity to review the Committee Program as a whole and identify what is working well and what may be improved moving forward.

Analysis

To inform the Committee Project, information was gathered through surveys and interviews with Committee members and staff. This data was summarized into key findings and grouped into ten themes; most themes focus on areas of improvement. The themes are "what we heard" in the data gathering phase and are opinions, not necessarily facts.

The ten themes that emerged are:
1. Committees Add Value
2. Committee Program Lacks a Clear Purpose
3. There are Inconsistencies in How Committees Operate
4. Committee Topics Need Review
5. Roles and Responsibilities are Unclear
6. Process for Committee Recommendations is Unclear
7. Committee Work Does Not Inform Council Decision-Making
8. Committees Lack Diversity
9. Facilitation is Inconsistent
10. No Recruitment or Training Strategy

Through staff and GAESC workshops, recommendations were developed to improve the Committee Program moving forward for each of the ten themes. Section 3 of the Recommendations Report, attached as Appendix A, outlines staff and GAESC recommendations for improving the Committee Program. The recommendations are also summarized in the chart below.

Both the themes and the recommendations have been shared with GAESC and were presented to Council at Committee of the Whole on September 12, 2023. The feedback gathered from both these groups has been incorporated into the Recommendations Report, attached Appendix A.

The Chart below contains a summary of the recommendations that were made for each theme. The detailed analysis of each can be found in Appendix A.

	Theme	Recommendations
1	Committees Add Value	• There is value in the Committee Program to the RMOW, Council, and the community. Do not remove the Committee Program entirely. • Maintain the parts of the Committee Program that are working well.

2	The Committee Program Lacks a Clear Purpose	• Adopt a clear purpose statement for the Committee of Council Program. The primary purposes of Committees of Council are to:
		   o advance Council priorities,
		   o provide advice and recommendations to Council,
		   o help solve complex problems through collaboration,
		   o engage subject-matter experts,
		   o collect community perspective.
		 • Moving forward, keep this purpose front and center as Committees do their work.

3	There are Inconsistencies in How Committees Operate	• Develop standard operating procedures for Committees that outline consistent processes for tasks and activities (with flexibility). • Develop a standardized Terms of Reference template (with flexibility) to create more consistency in how Committees operate.

	Theme	Recommendations
4	Committee Topics Need Review	• Review Committee topics for relevance and need. • Adopt a smaller, more efficient model for the Committee Program focused on Council priorities. (There are two proposed Committee structures for Council's consideration. Both are outlined in Section titled **Error! Reference source not found.**).
5	Roles and Responsibilities are Unclear	• Develop clear roles and responsibilities of Committee members. • Provide clarity regarding who contributes to, sets, and drives Committee priorities and workplan. • Develop a process where all Committee members contribute to Committee priorities, workplan, and meeting agendas.
6	The Process for Committee Recommendations is Unclear	• Confirm the process for Committees to put recommendations forward to Council. • Ensure each Committee is clear on the problem they are being asked to address, what level of influence they will have and how their input will be used by Council.
7	Committee Work Does Not Inform Council Decision-Making	• Develop a more robust reporting out process for Committees to share workplans, learnings, and accomplishments with Council. • Develop a feedback loop from Council back to the Committee. • Each January, dedicate one (or two) Committee of the Whole meeting to Committee and Working Group updates.
8	Committees Lack Diversity	• Review Committee membership with the lens of diversity. • Consider ways we can increase diversity on Committees, so they are more reflective of the community. • Develop an Inclusion and Diversity Strategy for Committees.
9	Facilitation is Inconsistent	• Develop a consistent approach to facilitation for all Committees that gives room for discussion and feedback. • Provide facilitation training to staff and Chairs. • Develop a process for the Staff Liaison and Chair to connect before meetings.
10	There is No Recruitment or Training Strategy	• Develop a more coordinated recruitment strategy for Committees. • Develop and execute a training and onboarding program for Committees of Council members (staff, Council and community representatives).

Committee Structure and Topics

Of special note, Recommendation Four to review the Committee topics has resulted in considerable proposed changes to the existing Committee Program structure. Both staff and the GAESC reviewed the current Committee structure and mandates in workshops. Workshop participants considered the insights from the surveys and interviews when evaluating a variety of potential solutions. Specific insights included:

- There are too many committees;
- Committee topics should align with Council priorities;
- Climate action and housing are missing Committee topics;
- Committee mandates are too narrow;
- Several committees have completed the work they set out to achieve (met their mandate) and should be disbanded; and
- Some of the current committees should have been initiated as working groups (collaborative, not advisory) or taskforces (narrow mandate with short-term timeline).

The outcomes of staff and GAESC discussions resulted in substantial proposed changes to the Committee Program structure. The groups have landed on two slightly different proposals for Council's consideration. For transparency, both staff and GAESC perspectives, and the rationale behind them, are shared in this report.

Error! Reference source not found. **- Staff Recommendation**

First, staff identified which Committees have completed the work they set out to achieve and met their initial mandate.

Staff put forward a recommendation to disband:
- Public Art Committee
- Mayor's Task Force on Resident Housing

Next, staff considered the Committees that should remain in their current capacity. These Committees are effective, are advisory in nature, and are relevant to Council or RMOW priorities, are legislated, and/or provide required operational oversight.

Staff put forward a recommendation to keep in their current capacity:
- Human Resources Standing Committee
- Audit and Finance Standing Committee
- Accessibility and Inclusion Select Committee
- Liquor License Advisory Committee
- Advisory Design Panel

Next staff evaluated which committees could be amalgamated (topics, mandates, and memberships are related or overlap) and shifted to align with current Council priorities. Insights from the surveys and interviews stressed the desire for fewer committees with broader mandates focused on current Council priorities to help advance Council objectives for the term.

Staff put forward a recommendation to amalgamate and align with current Council priorities:
- Shift current Strategic Planning Committee to **Housing and Strategy** to focus on high level policy for housing and long-term strategy for the RMOW.
- Amalgamate Transportation Advisory Committee and Forests and Wildland Advisory Committee to **Climate Action and Environment** to focus on matters related to the Community Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) and the 6 Big Moves.
- Amalgamate Economic Partnership Initiative Committee, Festivals, Events and Animation Oversight Committee, and the Recreation Leisure Advisory Committee, to **Smart Tourism** to guide the development and implementation of a resort-wide sustainable tourism vision and collaborative destination management strategy.
- Introduce a **Community Engagement Working Group** to inform the RMOW engagement process and ensure the RMOW is engaging the community in an effective way.

Next, staff assessed which Committees should be shifted to working groups. In the survey and interview feedback we heard that several Committees do not provide advisory guidance, but instead focus on operational, practical, and task-driven work. Often these committees are focused on implementing and monitoring policies and strategies already endorsed by Council. While it was reiterated that these groups do great work and offer considerable value to the organization, they do not serve in an advisory capacity, offering opinions, suggestions, and feedback to Council on specific issues, policies, strategies, or decisions.

Staff put forward a recommendation to shift the following committees to working groups:
- Emergency Planning Committee
- May Long Weekend Committee
- Technology Advisory Committee
- Transit Management Advisory Committee
- Whistler Bear Advisory Committee
- Zero Waste Select Committee

Finally, staff evaluated which committees are currently focused on policies and strategies that require input, feedback, and discussion from all of Council through the entirety of the process. Certain topics with significant strategic implications for Council, the organization, or the community warrant direct and ongoing involvement from all of Council.

Staff put forward a recommendation to elevate to all of Council:
- Governance and Ethics Standing Committee

Proposed Committee Program Structure – Staff Recommendation

Staff feel the proposed structure creates a Committee Program that is efficient, focused, and aligned with current Council priorities. By focusing committees on advising Council, committees can maintain their strategic role and offer insights, expertise, and recommendations to Council to enhance Council decision-making.
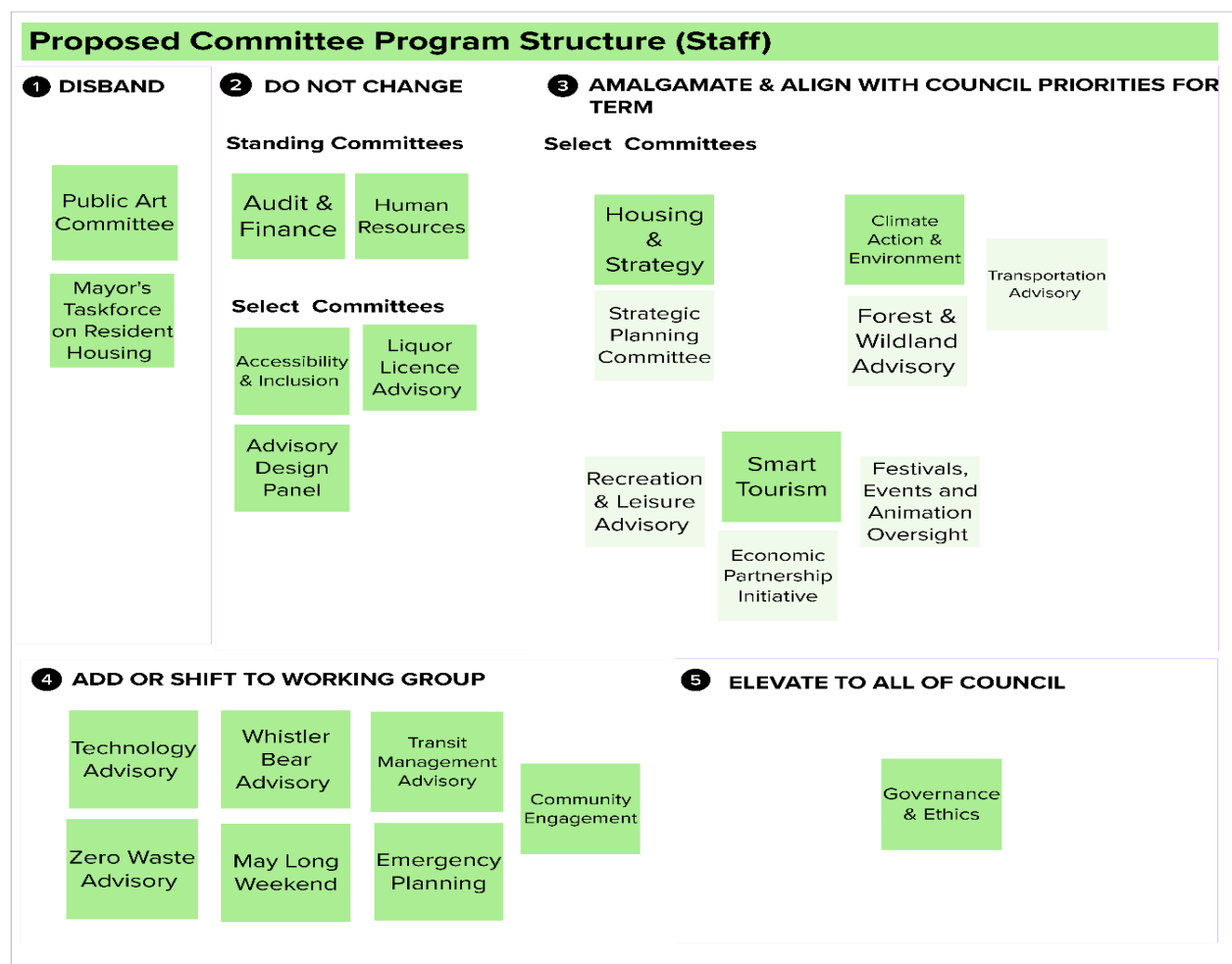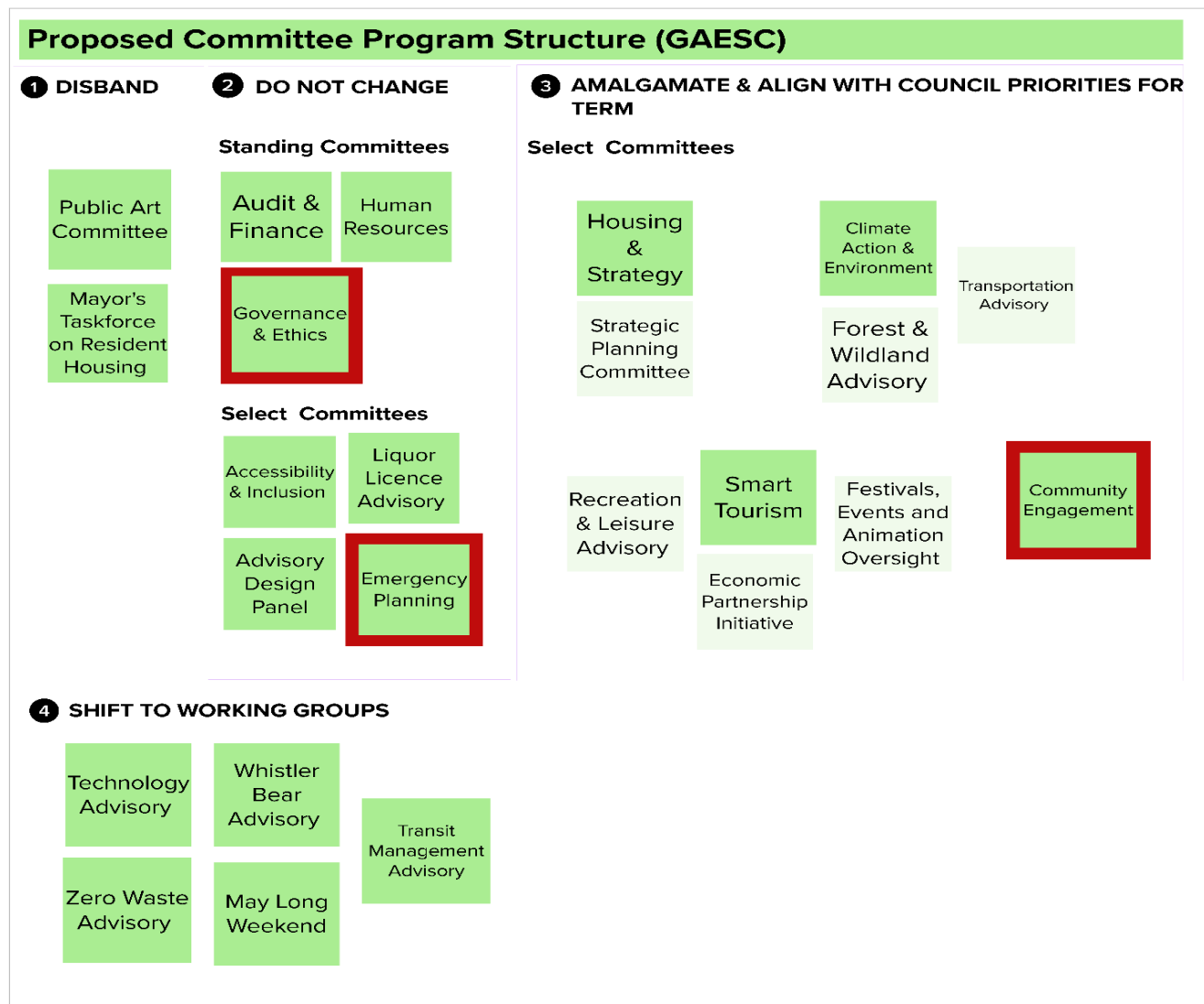
Proposed Committee Program Structure - GAESC Recommendation

Like staff, GAESC thoughtfully considered how best to restructure committee topics and followed a similar step-by-step review process as outlined above. The proposed structure put forward by GAESC is the same as the staff recommendation with three noted differences:

1. The proposed Community Engagement Working Group is established as a Select Committee of Council as opposed to a Working Group to demonstrate its importance of Council and to reflect GAESC's request to have Council representation on the Committee.

2. The Emergency Planning Committee remains as a Select Committee to continue to have Council representation on the Committee.

3. Governance & Ethics Standing Committee remains a Standing Committee to ensure the work of this committee is advanced upon and not lost.

The differences between the staff and GAESC recommendations are highlighted in red.

Proposed Committee Program Structure (GAESC)

① DISBAND
② DO NOT CHANGE
③ AMALGAMATE & ALIGN WITH COUNCIL PRIORITIES FOR TERM

Standing Committees
Select Committees

Public Art Committee
Audit & Finance
Human Resources
Housing & Strategy
Climate Action & Environment
Transportation Advisory

Mayor's Taskforce on Resident Housing
Governance & Ethics
Strategic Planning Committee
Forest & Wildland Advisory

Select Committees
Accessibility & Inclusion
Liquor Licence Advisory
Recreation & Leisure Advisory
Smart Tourism
Festivals, Events and Animation Oversight
Community Engagement

Advisory Design Panel
Emergency Planning
Economic Partnership Initiative

④ SHIFT TO WORKING GROUPS
Technology Advisory
Whistler Bear Advisory
Transit Management Advisory
Zero Waste Advisory
May Long Weekend

OPTIONS

As mentioned above, there are two options for Council's consideration for the committee program structure (Recommendation Four); Option A put forward by staff and Option B put forward by GAESC.

Option A

That Council endorse the Committee of Council Review Project Key Findings and Recommendations Report, including the staff recommendations for the committee program structure (Recommendation Four), as presented in Appendix A attached to this Administrative Report to Council No. 23-099 and direct staff to prepare a plan to implement the recommendations.

Option B

That Council endorse the Committee of Council Review Project Key Findings and Recommendations Report, including the GAESC recommendations for the committee program structure (Recommendation Four), as presented in Appendix A attached to this Administrative Report to Council No. 23-099 and direct staff to prepare a plan to implement the recommendations.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions

The legal framework for Council committees is set out in the *Community Charter.*

2023-2026 Strategic Plan

The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan outlines the high-level direction of the RMOW to help shape community progress during this term of Council. The Strategic Plan contains four priority areas with various associated initiatives that support them. This section identifies how this report links to the Strategic Plan.

One of the key recommendations in the Recommendations Report includes reorganizing the Committee Program to align with the four strategic priority areas of Council. If endorsed, there will be a Committee or Working Group focused on each strategic priority to help advance Council's priorities for their term.

Strategic Priorities

☒ Housing

> *Expedite the delivery of and longer-term planning for employee housing*

☒ Climate Action

> *Mobilize municipal resources toward the implementation of the Big Moves Climate Action Plan*

☒ Community Engagement

> *Strive to connect locals to each other and to the RMOW*

☒ Smart Tourism

> *Preserve and protect Whistler's unique culture, natural assets and infrastructure*

☒ Not Applicable

> *Aligns with core municipal work that falls outside the strategic priorities but improves, maintains, updates and/or protects existing and essential community infrastructure or programs*

Community Vision and Official Community Plan

The Recommendations Report is consistent with and helps to achieve Whistler's Vision and Official Community Plan (OCP), which both reference the need to engage the community in decision-making. The characteristic of the vision most pertinent to the Committee Project is:

Participation: We are able to meaningfully participate in community decisions, collaborating to achieve our Community Vision.

Further, the Health, Safety and Well-being chapter of the OCP (Chapter 8) focuses on ensuring Whistler has strong community connections and social fabric—that Whistler is inclusive and affordable, and we enjoy high levels of trust, community engagement and good governance.

The following OCP goal, objective and policies provide direction related to Committees:

Goal: Provide and support meaningful opportunities for community engagement.
Objective: Encourage community engagement at all levels, from volunteerism to participation in municipal initiatives.
Policy: Provide appropriate and meaningful opportunities for community and partner engagement in policy-making and other decisions where relevant and appropriate.
Policy: Encourage greater diversity in municipally-led engagement initiatives, considering a variety of ways to engage diverse community stakeholders.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee Project is allocated budget in 2023 and additional budget will be requested for 2024. There is potential for additional budget implications for the Committee Program as staff build and implement the recommendations. Staff will provide further details as they are developed through the implementation phase.

LÍL̓WAT NATION & SQUAMISH NATION CONSIDERATIONS

The RMOW is committed to working with the Líl̓wat 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.

As part of the review, staff heard that our committees lack diversity of membership. Moving forward, staff and Council will be considering ways to increase diversity on our committees, so they are more reflective and representative of the community. This includes ways to increase indigenous representation from the communities of *L'il'wat7úl* and *Skwxwú7mesh*.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

☐ Inform   ☐ Consult   ☒ Involve   ☐ Collaborate   ☐ Empower

The process to inform the development of the Recommendations Report involved informing, consulting, and involving Committee members including Council, staff, partner organizations, and community

members. The data for the Recommendations Report was gathered through surveys and interviews. 75 Committee members responded to the surveys and provided over 200 pages of data. The process also included interviews with staff and working sessions with staff and the GAESC which informed the recommendations.

REFERENCES

Appendix A – Committee of Council Review Project Key Findings and Recommendations Report

SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the Committee Project and outlines the key findings and recommendations for improving the Committee Program. The recommendations provide the foundation for staff and Council to assemble a more efficient, effective, and coordinated Committee Program that is aligned with current Council priorities that serve our community. This report seeks endorsement of the Recommendations Report and direction to develop a plan to implement the recommendations.

SIGN-OFFS

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