



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: December 17, 2024 **REPORT:** 24-111
FROM: Planning - Development **FILE:** 4320-30-1407
SUBJECT: WHISTLER PRIDE AND SKI FESTIVAL 2025 – TEMPORARY CHANGE TO
HOURS OF LIQUOR SERVICE

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

That the recommendation of the General Manager of Climate Action, Planning and Development Services be endorsed.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council authorize hours of liquor sales to extend to 4:00 a.m. for the Whistler Pride and Ski Festival Snowball Dance being held at the Whistler Conference Centre on January 25 to 26, 2025.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide a recommendation for Council's consideration regarding an application from Tourism Whistler (TW) for an extension of hours of liquor sales to 4:00 a.m. for the Whistler Pride and Ski Festival's (Whistler Pride) Snowball Dance at the Whistler Conference Centre (Conference Centre) on January 25 to 26, 2025.

Information Report Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

DISCUSSION

Background

The Conference Centre annually hosts the Snowball Dance as part of Whistler Pride. This event has been approved for extended hours each year from 2009-2019 and 2023-2024 with hours of liquor service to 4:00 a.m. These extended hours of service require municipal and provincial approval consistent with the municipality's bylaws and policies for liquor licensing.

TW holds a liquor primary licence (No. 106769) at the Conference Centre and has applied for a temporary extension of hours of liquor service for the Snowball Dance to be held Saturday, January 25 until 4:00 a.m. on Sunday, January 26, 2024. Under the licence, the permitted hours of liquor sales are from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 a.m., Monday through Saturday and 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. on Sunday.

Analysis

The Snowball Dance will have approximately 1,200 guests and is the final event of Whistler Pride. TW's application states that the Snowball Dance brings an additional 1,000 plus room nights to the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) over and above the week-long festival events.

The applicant's event information, attached as Appendix A, describes the benefits of the proposed extension of hours and the measures proposed to manage potential negative impacts. Appendix A also includes a temporary extension of hours of liquor service from 1:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for the Friday, January 24, 2025 Furrocious Party at the Conference Centre; however, the authorization for this extension is delegated to staff for approval under [Council Policy G-17: Municipal Liquor Licensing Policy](#) (Liquor Licensing Policy) and is not being considered as part of this report.

Appendix A addresses measures to mitigate potential negative impacts. These measures are supported by staff and are summarized as follows:

- Noise from the event itself will be substantially confined to the Conference Centre and is not expected to be objectionable outside of the building;
- The event organizers remind attendees through their program guide, social media, posters at the exit doors and in the washrooms and in-person by event staff to be respectful and quiet upon leaving the venue;
- Event organizers will communicate with taxi companies to be available as needed to pick-up guests leaving the event;
- With the late closing time, attendees tend to leave the event throughout the evening instead of all at the same time. Many event attendees stay at nearby hotels and disperse quickly and quietly after the event;
- Host hotels (Aava and Crystal Lodge) are in close proximity to the venue for a short walk back to accommodations;
- Event attendees from past events have been found to be respectful of the Whistler community and each other; and
- Patrons leaving after 3:00 a.m. will not likely interact with those leaving nightclubs, which end liquor service at 2:00 a.m.

The Snowball Dance has been conducted in past years without problems and the 4:00 a.m. closing of liquor sale has the support of the Whistler RCMP detachment.

The proposed measures are expected to mitigate the potential for noise and disturbance from patrons leaving the event. Council has previously authorized 4:00 a.m. closing times at the Conference Centre for Whistler Pride events (2009-2019 and 2023-2024) and for World Ski and Snowboard Festival events (2008-2019), and there were no negative impacts on the community.

Current Good Standing Status

The Liquor Licensing Policy requires any establishment applying for a temporary liquor license change to be in good standing with respect to compliance and enforcement history of the establishment. This application was referred to the Whistler RCMP Detachment, Whistler Fire Rescue Services and the RMOW Building and Bylaw Departments. The applicant is in good standing with no outstanding issues.

Zoning Analysis

The Conference Centre lands are zoned Commercial Core One (CC1). The CC1 Zone permits establishments licenced for the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages on the. The proposal is compliant with all other land use regulations.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions

The [Liquor Licensing Policy](#) requires Council consideration and approval for a temporary change to a liquor primary licence for hours of liquor service past 2:00 a.m. The policy further supports a Whistler Pride single weekend event at the Conference Centre with a 4:00 a.m. closing time for liquor service,

subject to annual review, Council approval, plans approved by the municipality for the mitigation of potential negative impacts and the Conference Centre being in good standing.

[December 19, 2023, Administrative Report No. 23-125 – Whistler Pride – Temporary Change to Hours of Liquor Service](#): Council authorized that the hours of liquor sales to extend to 4:00 a.m. for the Snowball Dance.

[December 20, 2022, Administrative Report No. 22-152 – Whistler Pride and Ski Festival – Temporary Change to Hours of Liquor Service](#): Council authorized that the hours of liquor sales to extend to 4:00 a.m. for the Snowball Dance.

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.

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 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 recommended resolution included within this report aligns with the following economic viability and land use and development policies of the OCP:

- Support increased cultural, education and learning, arts, entertainment, events, sport tourism, and health and wellness opportunities that diversify our tourism-based economy using existing infrastructure.
- Manage liquor licensing to support a wide variety of food and beverage offerings and maintain a safe and friendly atmosphere. Work with relevant agencies and stakeholders to reduce negative impacts of liquor-related issues associated with late-night entertainment uses.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The municipal application fee for a temporary change to an existing licence is structured to cover staff costs for processing the application.

LÍLWAT NATION & SQUAMISH NATION CONSIDERATIONS

The RMOW is committed to working with the Líl'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 planning on unceded territories, as currently managed by the provincial government; achieve mutual objectives and enable participation in Whistler's resort economy.

There are no specific considerations to include in this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

Inform Consult Involve Collaborate Empower

In accordance with the Liquor Licensing Policy, the application was referred to the Municipal Liquor Licensing Advisory Committee for their individual comments. No concerns were expressed.

REFERENCES

Appendix A – Whistler Conference Centre 2025 Snowball Dance Event Information

SUMMARY

This report presents an application from TW for a temporary extension of hours of liquor sale until 4:00 a.m. on Sunday January 26, 2025 for the Snowball Dance, the final event of Whistler Pride scheduled for the night of Saturday, January 25th. Staff recommend that Council approve the extension of hours of liquor sales for this event.

SIGN-OFFS

Written by:

Brook McCrady,
Planning Analyst

Reviewed by:

Melissa Laidlaw,
Director of Planning

Dale Mikkelsen,
General Manager of Climate Action, Planning
and Development Services

Virginia Cullen,
Chief Administrative Officer