



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: February 25, 2025 **REPORT:** 25-012
FROM: Community Engagement & Cultural Services **FILE:** 1850-30-2025
SUBJECT: 2025 FEE FOR SERVICE FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

That the recommendation of the General Manager of Community Engagement & Cultural Services be endorsed.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council endorse the Resort Municipality of Whistler entering Fee for Service funding (FFS) agreements to set the annual baseline funding amount with the following five organizations for a three-year term from 2025 – 2027:

- Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council up to \$75,705;
- Whistler Animals Galore up to \$124,373;
- Whistler Off-Road Cycling Association up to \$290,925;
- Whistler Museum and Archives Society up to \$224,950; and
- Whistler Arts Council up to \$594,825;

subject to each of the above-named organizations agreeing to the terms and conditions of a FFS agreement substantially in the form attached as Appendix A to Administrative Report No. 25-012.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a summary of the 2025 Fee for Service (FFS) funding process and the recommended FFS funding investments for 2025.

Information Report Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

DISCUSSION

Background

In accordance with *Council Policy A-39 Fee for Service* (Policy A-39) (Appendix B) the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) provides funding to local not-for-profit organizations that provide programs and/or services that Council considers necessary to move the RMOW toward achieving the vision, goals and objectives identified in its Official Community Plan (OCP). Policy A-39 also aims to meet key objectives through the FFS program including value for money, the community benefiting

from the expertise and experience of FFS recipient organizations and delivery of services or programs that if not provided by the FFS recipients, would necessitate delivery by the RMOW.

FFS recipients must meet all eligibility criteria as described in section 5 of Policy A-39, but first and foremost they must be a not-for-profit organization located in the RMOW that serves the residents of Whistler, although their services may extend through the Sea to Sky corridor. In late September 2024, following the Council approval of the revised Policy A-39, RMOW staff invited all five of the current FFS recipients, listed below (FFS Recipients) to apply following the process outlined in Section 8 of Policy A-39. RMOW staff received completed FFS applications from all five previous FFS Recipients on or prior to the due date. There were no new FFS applicants for 2025.

Analysis

Policy A-39 permits FFS Recipients to apply for a three-year agreement. As per Policy A-39, the first year of Council-approved funding becomes the baseline annual funding for the entire three-year timeframe, subject to unforeseen changes in the RMOW's financial position. A standard FFS agreement (FFS Agreement) is attached to this report as Appendix A. The FFS Recipients were asked to describe the services and programs their organization provides that are supported by FFS, how these services align with the OCP, and other corporate plans and the level of funding requested for the three-year term. The funding requests and the staff recommended baseline funding amount for the agreement is shown in the table below.

Section 7 of Policy A-39 sets out the weighted evaluation for FFS Recipients:

- 40 per cent for the extent to which the proposed service is necessary to Whistler and addresses a community need or service gap,
- 10 per cent for thoroughness, accuracy, clarity of the application,
- 30 per cent for the extent to which the applicant is uniquely positioned to deliver the services and provide value for money to the RMOW and taxpayers, and
- 20 per cent for alignment with the OCP and other Corporate Plans.

The "Five-Year Financial Plan 2025-2029 Bylaw No. 2465, 2025" (5YFP Bylaw) presented to Council for first three readings on Jan 21, 2025, proposed a three per cent increase to the overall FFS budget to \$1,310,778. The proposed increase recognizes a request by several of the organizations to maintain competitive wages and to address the increasing cost of goods and services provided by these organizations. The FFS budget is funded both by taxation and the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT). It is staff's recommendation that the three per cent increase be applied evenly to each organization on their 2024 FFS amount as the baseline funding level for their three-year FFS Agreements.

Each year staff and Council are challenged with difficult trade-offs in the budget process that must necessarily support asset management (including reserves), deliver operations effectively, and accomplish Council's Strategic Plan goals. Within this context, staff believe that the funding recommended in 2025 for each FFS Recipient is reasonable and balanced alongside other competing budgetary pressures. Staff have also provided a description and a monetary estimate of the Value in Kind (VIK) contributions that the five organizations receive from the RMOW to ensure transparency to the community of the full benefit received by each organization.

2025 FFS Staff Recommendations

	2024 Funding	2025 Ask	2026 Ask	2027 Ask	Recommended Baseline Funding
Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council (SSISC)	\$73,500	\$75,705	\$77,219	\$78,763	75,705
Whistler Animals Galore (WAG)	\$120,750	\$198,000	\$208,100	\$218,500	124,373
Whistler Off-Road Cycling Association (WORCA)	\$282,450	\$320,900	\$290,900	\$290,900	290,925
Whistler Museum (Museum)	\$218,400	\$229,320	\$234,365	\$239,521	224,950
Whistler Arts Council (dba Arts Whistler) (AW)	\$577,500	600,000	\$612,000	\$624,240	594,825
				Total	\$1,310,778

A description of how the organizations will use their FFS funding and the FFS funding source for each organization is provided below. The applications for each organization are provided in Appendices C through G.

SSISC

2025-2027 Baseline Annual Funding Recommendation	Funding Source	Estimated VIK Contribution
\$75,705	General Operations Fund (property tax)	~ \$7,551

The SSISC’s mission is to minimise the threat of invasive species that negatively impact the environment, the economy and human health. FFS funding is primarily allocated for program wages, equipment and supplies for:

- Invasive species expertise, coordination and program development;
- Training, education and outreach;
- Invasive plant eradication field program; and
- Environmental protection bylaw implementation support.

SSISC delivers services that are critical to protecting Whistler’s biodiversity and ecosystems. This organization’s mission links well with the OCP and Council’s Strategic Priority of Climate Action. FFS funding is also leveraged by SSISC to raise additional funds and provides a critical service that the RMOW would be required to fill.

SSISC is also a beneficiary of VIK benefits for rent of approximately of \$517/month (\$6,214/year) and BC Hydro fees to operate out of the municipal Forestry Building.

WAG

2025-2027 Baseline Annual Funding Recommendation	Funding Source	Estimated VIK Contribution
\$124,373	General Operations Fund (property tax)	~ \$89,226

WAG’s mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment to homeless and lost dogs and cats in our community and to be advocates in finding their forever homes.

FFS funding is primarily allocated for program wages and administrative wages for bylaw impound services (animals delivered to WAG from RMOW Bylaw Officers), rehoming, rescuing and outreach.

WAG provides an essential service in the form of impound services. They can scale the operation and raise funds from a variety of sources.

WAG receives VIK from the RMOW through utility costs and rental subsidies for use of municipal space for their operations, amounting to approximately \$87,000 a year. Staff note that WAG receives impound fees and dog licence fees purchased directly at WAG. In addition, licence fees collected at municipal hall for the month of January go directly to WAG. In 2023 they received \$2,306 and in 2024 the total was \$2,226.

WORCA

2025-2027 Baseline Recommendation	Funding Source	Other RMOW contributions (FE&A)
\$290,925	\$288,153 MRDT \$2,772 General Operations Fund (property tax)	\$5,000

WORCA’s mission is to foster mountain bike experiences and deliver world-class trails. FFS funding is primarily allocated for program wages for trail maintenance.

WORCA’s focus on trail maintenance underscores the importance of trail safety and the visitor experience. In addition, WORCA’s volunteers also contribute their time and talent to trail maintenance, making the FFS funding go further. The organization works closely with RMOW Parks and Trails and Resort Operations to ensure alignment on priorities and tasks. Their work aligns with the OCP and aligns with Council’s Strategic Plan Priority of Smart Tourism.

WORCA was also a beneficiary of funding from the RMOW Festival Events and Animation (FE&A) team for their Back Forty event amounting to \$5,000 in 2024.

WHISTLER MUSEUM

2025-2027 Baseline Funding Recommendation	Funding Source	Estimated Annual VIK
\$224,950	General Operations Fund (property tax)	~ \$63,500

Whistler Museum’s mission is to collect, preserve, document and interpret the natural and human history of mountain life – with an emphasis on Whistler – and to provide a forum in which to present an innovative range of exhibitions and education programs to enrich the lives of residents and guests.

FFS funding is primarily for administrative wages to operate Whistler Museum.

Whistler Museum offers important archival services, supports cultural and heritage tourism, and preserves the history of how the town and mountain developed.

Whistler Museum receives various forms of VIK from the RMOW through rental subsidies valued at \$63,500 per year plus Fortis Gas fees. From time-to-time the Whistler Museum is also contracted to provide services for research, signage and restoration work.

ARTS WHISTLER (AW)

2024 FFS Staff Recommendation	Funding Source	Estimated Annual VIK
\$594,825	\$589,067 MRDT \$5,758 General Operations Fund (property tax)	~ \$725,440

AW’s mission is to make art happen.

2024 FFS funds will be used primarily for wages and program expenses for:

- Maury Young Arts Centre operational costs;
- Staffing costs; and
- Producing and executing events for locals and visitors, both admission-based and free.

AW leverages the FFS contribution to raise additional funds and contributes significantly to the arts and culture experience in the community, providing a range of events, programs and village animation for all ages and interests throughout the year. In addition to the FFS, the RMOW provides additional support to the organization through VIK rental subsidies amounting to \$681,000 per year, and utility costs of \$44,440 in 2024 and other miscellaneous costs.

AW has also received various levels of funding each year for event animation from the FE&A team, which is anticipated to continue for 2025.

Conditions in FFS Agreements

Several conditions are applied to each of the organizations regarding the optimization of FFS funding including but not limited to:

- Public recognition by the recipient of their FFS funding by the RMOW.
- Defining the eligible use of FFS funding in each case.
- Including an RMOW appointee on their Board of Directors if annual FFS funding exceeds \$100,000.
- Providing FFS status reports to RMOW staff in a timely manner, as required.
- Inclusion of “up to” wording in the FFS Agreement regarding total funding amounts to ensure recipients fulfill their commitments.
- A review process at the end of the FFS Agreement term, prior to renewal.

Each of the five organizations were recipients of FFS funding in 2024 and all have fulfilled the obligations of their agreements to date.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions

Policy A-39 – guides the RMOW in the FFS program, attached as Appendix B. Policy A-39 was revised in late 2024 to enable multi-year agreements, address some administrative challenges, and provide clarity on how new applicants would be considered.

[September 10, 2024, Committee of the Whole Report No. COTW001](#): Draft Policy A-39 Review.

[September 24, 2024, Administrative Report No 24-091](#): Policy A-39 amendments adopted by Council.

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 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.

Policy A-39, Section 3.0 identifies FFS Guiding Principles including (but not limited to):

Chapter 6: Economic Viability Our Shared Future (partial narrative): facilities, works and services, operations, maintenance levels and community programming including events are an important factor in maintaining the authentic mountain experience. Investments undergo scrutiny to maximize benefit to the resort community and minimize taxpayer impact, ensuring the highest and best use of limited financial, social and natural resources in the long term.

6.4.1.3. Policy Emphasize resourcefulness across the municipality while delivering cost-effective and affordable service excellence.

CHAPTER 8 HEALTH, SAFETY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

8.1. Goal: Promote, encourage and support initiatives that strengthen the community's sense of place and sense of belonging.

8.1.1. Objective Protect and enhance Whistler's character and sense of place.

8.1.1.1. Policy Support initiatives that preserve and celebrate Whistler's character, sense of place and unique, authentic mountain culture.

8.1.2. Objective Promote and support connections to the natural environment.

8.1.2.2. Policy Promote and encourage a culture of environmental protection and sustainability and living and playing within the community's carrying capacity.

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

8.6.2. Objective Work with partners to achieve mutual benefits.

8.7.2.10. Policy Support responsible animal control, shelter and care through a local shelter program.

CHAPTER 9 LEARNING, CULTURE AND RECREATION

9.2. Goal Support and enhance the growth and vitality of Whistler's Arts, Nature, and Heritage (ANH) sector, including fostering conditions that enable Whistler's ANH sector workers to live and work in the resort community.

9.5.8.5. Policy Continue to collaborate with relevant agencies, user groups, stakeholders, local health authorities and the Squamish Nation and Lil'wat Nation regarding recreational trail management and development issues in Whistler and the Sea to Sky corridor, including the Sea to Sky Trail.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The total recommended 2025 FFS funding is \$1,310,778 and aligns with the 5YFP Bylaw that has received first three readings. The proposed sources of 2025 FFS funds are:

- MRDT: \$877,220 (WORCA - \$288,153, AW \$589,067)
- RMOW (general tax): \$433,558 (SSISC, WAG, Museum, WORCA, AW)

In accordance with the Policy A-39, FFS Agreements are subject to the adoption of the annual RMOW budget and five-year financial plan.

Furthermore, FFS Agreements include a clause permitting the reduction of funds due to any significant and unforeseen RMOW operational or MRDT revenue shortfall.

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.

All the 2025 FFS applicants mention First Nations alignment, outreach and programming as follows:

SSISC

- In alignment with Chapter 3 of the OCP, the SSISC works directly with the Squamish Nation & Lílwat Nation and have well-established collaborative working relationships.

WAG

- In partnership with the Lílwat Nation WAG hosts offsite Animal Wellness Clinics which help families who cannot afford regular veterinary care that includes spay and neuter surgeries, parasite control and regular veterinary exams.
- WAG works with the Lílwat Nation in the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation to achieve the collective goal of enriching community life through animal welfare and education.
- WAG has successfully completed two Animal Wellness Clinics within the Lílwat Nation and have two more planned this Fall.
- Over the past decade WAG has developed a positive working partnership with the Lílwat Nation community. This relationship allows WAG to work together to achieve a shared goal of reducing the stray animal population, reducing animal suffering and positively impacting the local health and safety for animals and human residents.

WORCA

- Specific OCP points that WORCA's services achieve: 9.5.8.5. Policy: Continue to collaborate with relevant agencies, user groups, stakeholders, local health authorities and the Squamish Nation and the Lílwat Nation regarding recreational trail management and development issues in Whistler and the Sea to Sky corridor.

MUSEUM

- Whistler Museum is important in strengthening the community's sense of place and sense of belonging; this also includes strengthening knowledge and relationships with the Squamish Nation and the Lílwat Nation.

AW

- AW programs provide opportunities to share the history and culture of the local First Nations and other Indigenous peoples of Canada through visual art, music, lectures, workshops and craft sharing which promotes education and relationship building.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

Inform Consult Involve Collaborate Empower

Consistent with Policy A-39 and in accordance with Part 3 of the *Community Charter*, the RMOW must provide public notice of its intention to provide assistance by identifying the recipients of the assistance, and describing the nature, term and extent of the proposed assistance. Subject to Council's decision, notices were placed in *The Pique* on January 26 and February 2.

REFERENCES

Appendix A – Standard Fee for Service Agreement
Appendix B – *Council Policy A-39: Fee for Service*
Appendix C – SSISC 2025 FFS Application
Appendix D – WAG 2025 FFS Application
Appendix E – WORCA 2025 FFS Application
Appendix F – Museum 2025 FFS Application
Appendix G – AW 2025 FFS Application

SUMMARY

After review and consideration of the 2025 FFS funding applications, staff are recommending \$1,310,778 in funding for the FFS program, funded in part by MRDT and in part the General Operating Fund. The FFS Recipients will be signing three-year FFS Agreements and their recommended annual baseline funding is provided in the table on page three of this report. With Council's approval of the funding, staff will execute a FFS Agreement, substantially in the form as attached in Appendix A, but tailored to reflect the services, funding and reporting requirements of each organization.

SIGN-OFFS

Written by:

Karen Elliott,
General Manager, Community Engagement &
Cultural Services

Reviewed by:

Virginia Cullen,
Chief Administrative Officer