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DISCUSSION

Background

On [April 24, 2024](#) at COTW, staff presented an initial form and massing study exercise for Lake Placid Road. The initial investigation explored potential future property redevelopment and revitalization of the streetscape along Lake Placid Road from Highway 99 west to Nita Lake Lodge. Following the COTW presentation, the project advanced to develop a neighbourhood planning process for Lake Placid Road and the surrounding area, encompassing the western portion of the Whistler Creek neighbourhood as outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Plan Area Map



The Plan will provide a framework for land use changes in the study area, ultimately leading to updated zoning. It will guide development along Lake Placid Road helping Whistler meet housing goals and HAF targets in areas identified for residential density in the OCP, and response to changes introduced by provincial Bill 44.

The WCW Plan aligns with the OCP, Strategic Plan housing priority, HAP and [Climate Action Big Moves Strategy](#) (Big Moves Strategy), and proactively addresses Bill 44 as described below.

The OCP supports developing a sub-area plan for Whistler Creek (Policy 4.1.4.13) as a mixed-use destination to address evolving resort and community needs. Redevelopment which will enhance the vibrancy, sense of place and character of the area is encouraged. It identifies potential for Lake Placid Road to evolve into a mixed-use street and for connections from Creekside Base through to Nita Lake Lodge.

The Strategic Plan identifies housing as one of the top priorities in Whistler. Council has identified innovative problem solving and approaches as a specific focus to addressing housing in Whistler. Several initiatives, including the WCW Plan and a housing action plan, are being worked on to expedite the delivery of long-term planning for employee housing.

The RMOW HAP also identified developing neighborhood plans as a future action to provide additional employee housing. The 2022 Housing Needs Report outlines current and anticipated housing needs in Whistler that include an increased supply of purpose-built rental housing, housing suitable for families, and smaller sized units to serve young people and older people downsizing, and adaptable or accessible housing to support aging in place.

The Plan offers a strong opportunity to implement the goals of the Big Moves Strategy. The Plan area is centrally located to commercial, service, retail, healthcare and recreation service, and is well-connected to Whistler’s trail network and public transit. The WCW Plan will support Climate Action Big Moves by facilitating new residential density in a neighbourhood well-served by transit and the Valley Trail, enabling more people to use public and active transportation as primary modes of travel by adding density in a transit-oriented neighbourhood (Big Move #1 – Move beyond the car, Big Move #2 – Decarbonize passenger & commercial transport) and developing compact housing allowing more people to live near transit, employment space, services, and amenities (Big Move #4 – Build resilient zero emission buildings zero-carbon operations and low embodied carbon materials and Big Move #6 – Close the loop & shift towards lower carbon consumption). Establishing parking standards will be part of the Plan development.

Bill 44 was introduced by the province in 2024 and requires the RMOW to permit small scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH). Creating a Plan is a proactive measure to incentivize more types of housing and more dwelling units than would be enabled through SSMUH alone. The Plan is important to ensure that the neighbourhood evolves in a deliberate way that provides more housing and greater diversity of housing, as well as strengthening the capacity for a successful supporting retail/commercial environment to strengthen Creekside as a complete community.

In February 2025, the RMOW was announced as a successful HAF recipient. Developing the WCW Plan with initiatives for densities beyond provincial SSMUH requirements is an initiative in the RMOW approved HAF Action plan, as part of the HAF grant agreement, targeting completion of future neighbourhood scenarios by July 2025 and a land use and policy plan by the end of 2025.

Project Process

Staff developed a project process for the WCW Plan as shown in Figure 2 and this report presents the results of the engagement that occurred during the Visioning (Phase 1) of this project.

Figure 2. Project Process



Phase 1: Visioning (Fall 2024-Winter 2025)

The first phase involved a background review, site analysis and public engagement. Community members were invited to share their views, concerns and expectations through an online questionnaire and two in-person open house events. The material was also presented to the Housing and Strategy Committee. The engagement process focused on gathering input on the following key topics:

- Confirming the shape and size of the Plan area;
- How participants view, visit and move around the Plan area;
- General thoughts and feelings about the Plan area (what attracts them there, pedestrian infrastructure use);
- Introducing draft Core Values and project principles;
- Priorities for housing and transportation; and
- Big Ideas that should be considered for the Plan area.

Core Values

Staff created five draft Core Values to guide the overall direction of the Plan by defining community priorities, derived from OCP policy, Council’s 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, HAP and Big Moves Strategy, and reflect the key opportunities for the neighbourhood. The Core Values were tested during Phase 1 public engagement which reinforced strong support for them. The table below outlines the Core Values that were tested and refined through the visioning phase.

Draft Core Values Tested in Phase 1	Core Values Refined After Phase 1 Engagement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Livable, Inclusive and Diverse 2. Walkable and Well-Connected 3. Quality Streetscape and Shared Spaces 4. Eclectic Community Character 5. Connection to Nature and Surrounding Environment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Livable, Inclusive and Diverse 2. Walkable and Well-Connected 3. Quality Streetscape and Shared Spaces 4. Vibrant Community Identity 5. Embrace the Natural Environment

Big Ideas

Seven draft Big Ideas were developed to represent transformative concepts to guide the evolution of WCW. The Plan will guide the implementation of these Big Ideas. These Big Ideas were developed based on research into challenges and opportunities in the Plan area along with consideration for how the area could evolve in ways that align with the five Core Values, Council-approved bylaws and strategies. The table below outlines the Big Ideas that were tested and refined through the visioning phase.

Draft Big Ideas Tested in Phase 1	Big Ideas Refined After Phase 1 Engagement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote diverse housing and increased density 2. Repurpose and reimagine underused spaces 3. Improve connectivity of the area 4. Enhance the streetscape and public realm along Lake Placid Road 5. Embrace a distinct neighbourhood character 6. Honour heritage and historical roots 7. Create a welcoming gateway 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diverse housing and increased density 2. Repurpose and reimagine underused spaces 3. Improve connectivity of the area 4. Revitalize streetscape and public realm 5. Maintain a distinct neighbourhood character 6. Honour heritage and historical roots 7. Support a thriving community 8. Connection to nature

The table below summarizes the Phase 1 engagement events:

Event/Activity	Details	Participation
Presentation to COTW: April 23, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff introduced the project after an initial exploratory exercise to visualize the potential streetscape improvements and redevelopment along Lake Placid Road. 	COTW
Online questionnaire and asset mapping: November 1 to 30, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An online questionnaire was launched to gather community feedback on the plan area, draft core values and big ideas. An asset map tool was launched to collect location-based input about what participants love or would like to see change in the plan area. Data was collected on how respondents currently view, visit and move around the plan area, and how they envision this changing in the future. 	<p>Questionnaires – 232 completed submissions</p> <p>Asset Map – 59 contributions</p> <p>Approximately 75 per cent of respondents live in Whistler on a permanent/seasonal basis.</p>
Communications: November 1 to 30, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project and public engagement activities have been promoted through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMOW social media channels. RMOW website – project feature page including interactive online mapping feature and a link to the online questionnaire. News releases in <i>The Pique</i>, <i>Whistler This Week</i> and the RMOW communications letter. Information boards located in Whistler Village and Whistler Creek. 	<p>RMOW social media posts - seen 9,646 times by 4,726 people. Attached link to the webpage clicked 255 times.</p> <p>Project feature page – over 1700 visits</p> <p>Online mapping feature – 58 contributions.</p>
In-person open house events: November 6, 2024 at, Fix Café, November 9, 2024 at Nita Lake Lodge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff introduced the project to interested members of the community via information boards Interested members of the community were invited to share their comments on the draft core values and big ideas and contribute to location-based input through asset mapping. 	<p>Wednesday (November 6) evening – 50 attendees</p> <p>Saturday (November 9) morning – 100 attendees</p>
Housing and Strategy Committee: January 20, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff presenting a summary of the first phase of engagement and outlined next steps Opportunity for discussion and input from Committee members about the plans strategy and considerations for Phase 2 	Housing and Strategy Committee – 11 voting members

Open Houses

The open houses provided an in-person opportunity for interested community members to review the initial project information about the background and to provide input about the Plan area on key engagement topics. A set of printed panels were displayed to share information about the project and several activity stations were set up to collect input from participants. Staff were on hand to help guide participants through the panels and to help participants provide feedback.

Questionnaire and Asset Mapping

The Phase 1 questionnaire presented high-level questions about the study area and proposed Plan area boundary, frequency of use and visits within the study area, sentiments about how the area is viewed currently and how participants would like to see the area in the future, priorities for housing and ideas for consideration. A total of 20 questions were posed, including ranking, open ended and multiple choice to collect input from participants about the background and vision for the plan. The Phase 1

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Public Engagement Visioning Report, attached as Appendix A to this report, includes a comprehensive engagement summary that analyzed the input collected for each question. Appendix A also includes the input record of the verbatim questionnaire results.

An asset mapping exercise was also created for participants to share place-based information about what they love or what they would like to see change in or around the proposed Plan area. Staff analyzed the input collected both online and in-person to create a complete summary of asset mapping comments included in the Phase 1 Public Engagement Visioning Report, attached as Appendix A. The complete record of verbatim comments is also included in Appendix A.

Presentation to Housing and Strategy Committee

Staff made a presentation to the Housing and Strategy Committee to introduce the project and provide an overview of the background information, and update of the first phase of project work underway and the public engagement program. Staff shared an update on the preliminary engagement summary and sought input from the committee on the values and ideas, how to encourage opportunities for redevelopment while keeping the character, and any gaps that should be considered. Minutes are publicly available when approved, therefore the minutes are not available at the time of writing this report.

Analysis

This section provides an outline of the feedback and input we received through the engagement process. Please see the Phase 1 Public Engagement Visioning Report, attached as Appendix A, for additional details and information. The full verbatim comments from the open house events and online questionnaire are also included in Appendix A.

The results of the engagement analysis are intended to illustrate broad trends, preferences, and themes to inform the future phases of this project. Staff determined the key themes by identifying key sentiments shared most often. The data from the online questionnaire and in person events have been combined to inform the overall engagement themes. Using the engagement analysis, two of the Core Values and two of the Big Ideas were modified, one Big Idea was removed and replaced by two new Big Ideas to reflect the input that was collected in Phase 1.

Key Themes

- **A place for people who live here**
Input emphasized the importance of adding development and improving amenities to benefit the existing population of residents and workers.
- **Potential for revitalization**
Respondents identified positive opportunities for change, recognizing several areas within the neighbourhood which are underdeveloped and could be repurposed to better serve the community.
- **Valued for its key part in Whistler's origin story**
Creekside Village and Whistler Creek hold an important place in the history of Whistler. Neighbourhood change should be a natural evolution rather than a break with the existing neighbourhood character and eclectic built fabric.
- **Desire for better connectivity**
Input highlighted the area's walkability, expressing a strong desire to create better connections to the surrounding area for people who walk, bike and take the bus.

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- Enhanced pedestrian realm and streetscape**
 Ideas for improved mobility were widely discussed with a particular focus on addressing street lighting and pedestrian movement across the highway.
- Housing which responds to employee needs**
 Housing is a critical issue, and respondents made it clear that priority should be given to housing which is functional and affordable for the local population.
- Access to lakes and the mountain**
 The importance of maintaining and enhancing connections to Nita Lake, Alpha Lake and Whistler Mountain was repeatedly highlighted to preserve access to the natural environment for everyone to enjoy.
- Vehicle movement and parking management**
 Improving vehicle circulation within the neighbourhood and at the Highway 99 intersection is a significant opportunity to improve access to the area.
- Support for Core Values and Big Ideas**
 Strong levels of support for the draft Core Values and the Big Ideas were indicated, with some minor suggestions for improvement to better reflect the input about identity and community sentiment.

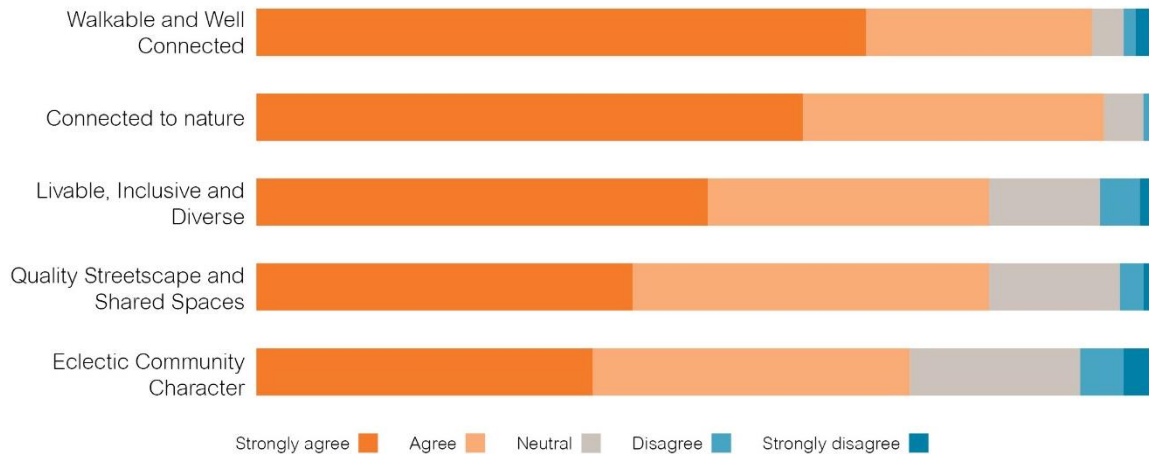
While many community members shared support for the Core Values and Big Ideas, some shared concern about change to the neighbourhood. The most frequent concerns related to increased density, the impact on already stressed vehicular routes, and concern about losing neighbourhood. There was also some opposition to the name ‘Whistler Creek West’.

What we heard	How we are listening
Increasing density will introduce significantly taller buildings which will affect the visual character of the streets. Development should be limited to 3-4 stories, particularly along Lake Placid Road.	Balancing the need for more affordable employee housing and the potential impact of SSMUH regulations allowing 4-6 plexes with lower building heights is a challenging issue. Phase 2 will examine ways to vary proposed building heights in different areas of the neighbourhood and use architectural features to maintain the character of the area and minimize the impact on the streetscape.
Increasing density will introduce more people and vehicles into the area which will create more traffic and reduce parking opportunities.	Staff are conducting a traffic analysis study to give an insight into how the current road system can be improved to mitigate negative impacts.
Implementing a Plan will change the character of the area. We heard a range of strong opinions, some individuals want the area to remain unchanged, some would like to see buildings with historic or community significance (Southside Diner, Rolands Pub, etc.) preserved and others had general concerns that the local, authentic atmosphere will be lost.	The new Core Value ‘vibrant community identity’ and Big Ideas ‘embrace a distinct neighbourhood character’ and ‘honor historical roots’ recognize the significance of Whistler Creek and Creekside’s local community and heritage. These guiding principles will inform future proposals to preserve this identity.
Resistance to the use of the name ‘Whistler Creek West’, rather than the more commonly used ‘Creekside’	While ‘Whistler Creek’ is the name used for the area in the OCP, given the strength of feedback related to this identity staff will reconsider the naming of the neighbourhood in Phase 2.

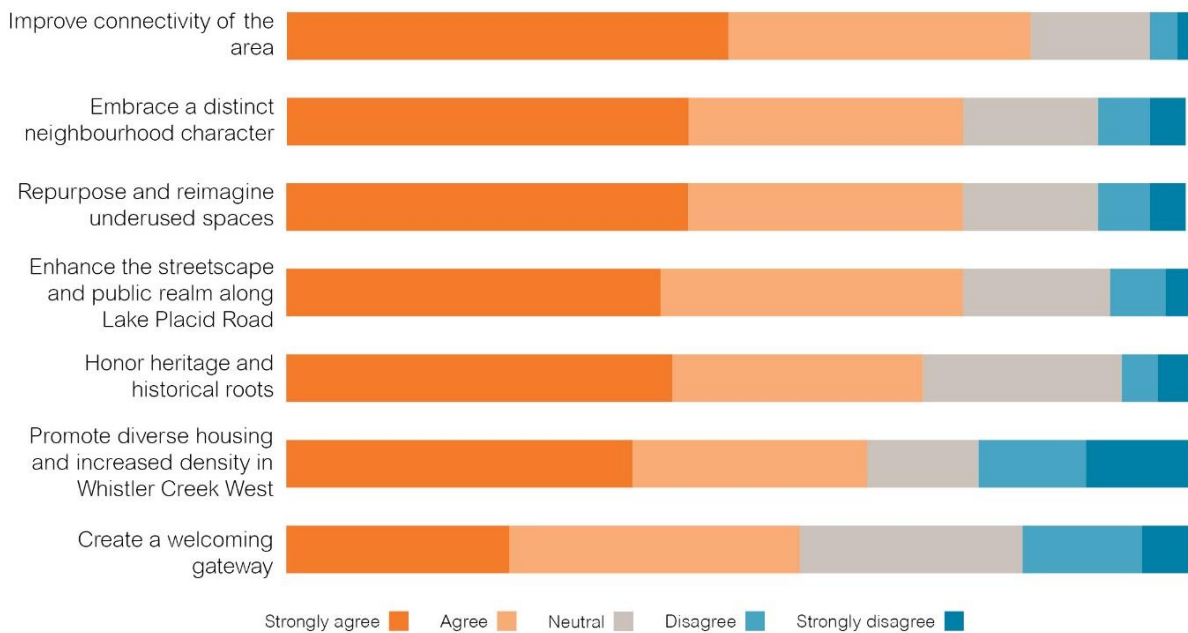
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Staff have reviewed and analysed community input from the engagement events. Overall, the draft Core Values and Big Ideas were very well supported, indicating that the Plan is aligned with community sentiment.

How closely do the following five core values align with what is important to you for the future of Whistler Creek West?



To what extent do the following ideas align with your vision for Whistler Creek West?



In response to the feedback received and on further review, staff have made some adjustments to the Core Values and Big Ideas. The changes are intended to better reflect the ideas and concerns shared by the community and will be used to inform the concept designs that will be developed and brought forward for review in Phase 2, and will inform decisions made by Council, staff and future development.

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Draft presented in Visioning Phase 1		Proposed	Reasons for change
Core Value	Eclectic Community Character	Vibrant Community Identity	This value was updated to reflect the ideal future identity of the neighbourhood, recognizing the distinct character and history of the area while seeking to establish a sense of place through buildings, streetscape and community networks.
Core Value	Connection to nature and the surrounding environment	Embrace the natural environment	Using the term 'embrace' rather than 'connection' will encourage more responsive integration of both existing and future changing conditions into the proposed Plan.
Big Idea	Enhance the streetscape and public realm along Lake Placid Road	Revitalize streetscape and public realm	Expand scope to give new life to streetscapes throughout the whole Plan area.
Big Idea	Embrace a distinct neighbourhood character	Maintain a distinct neighbourhood character	Using the term 'maintain' over 'embrace' goes further to preserve the specific local identity of the area.
Big Idea	Create a welcoming gateway	Removed	The word 'gateway' was frequently misinterpreted, with significant concerns that the Plan would prioritize visitors over local needs. It is replaced by 'Support a thriving community' to reflect this input.
Big Idea	New - added based on Phase 1 input	Support a thriving community	We heard support for a Neighbourhood Plan that supports a thriving community with housing for workers and a connection to Whistler's history. This new Big Idea encourages a focus on employee housing, maintaining appropriate commercial space for local and tourist-serving businesses, and recalling the history of Creekside as an original Whistler neighbourhood.
Big Idea	New - added based on Phase 1 input	Connection to nature	We frequently heard that the connections to the lakes and mountains were of high value to residents. This new Big Idea encourages nurturing those relationships and preserving the existing natural environment.

Next Steps

The second phase of community engagement will seek input on Plan scenarios. A scenario will be developed using input from Phase 1 Visioning, as well as the results of a policy review and infrastructure assessment. Phase 2 engagement will focus on refining the concept including the land uses, building forms, streetscape design, public and open space considerations, and connectivity to and through the neighbourhood. The public engagement for Phase 2 is expected to occur during Spring 2025. Staff will present the Phase 2 engagement plan to COTW in late April.

Community engagement in Phase 2 will establish continuity with the project process to development a neighbourhood revitalization plan. Like the first phase of community engagement, staff propose a mix of in-person and online engagement methods, including:

- Presentation to COTW;
- Project information and the Phase 2 concept will be available on the project engagement page. The engagement page will also host a questionnaire seeking input from participants;
- Hosting in-person open house sessions at a convenient location within the study area to share project information displayed through visual panels and collect input from community members on key engagement topics;

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- A youth focused event is proposed to take place at the RMOW's Youth Centre with engagement plans and opportunities for input to be in-place through the end of the Phase 2 engagement period; and
- Presentations are proposed for the Advisory Design Panel and the Housing and Strategy Select Committee of Council where the matter is directly applicable to the Committee's purpose.

Staff will report back to Council following the second phase of community engagement and present the draft plan.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions

[April 23, 2024](#) – Presentation to Committee of the Whole: Lake Placid Road Neighbourhood Study

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.

The following provides an overview of relevant goals, objectives, and policies established in the OCP.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 4.1.4.13 Policy | Develop sub-area plans when appropriate to address evolving resort and community needs for specific areas of the community and to use as the basis for any proposed changes in land use and development that alter Whistler's overall pattern of land use and development. Consider sub-area plans for Whistler Creek, Function Junction and Whistler's light industrial areas. |
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| 5.6.5 | Objective | Strengthen the sense of place and vibrancy of the Whistler Creek core commercial sub-area as a mixed-use destination for visitors and residents anchored by the Creekside ski base and Whistler Creek neighbourhood area. |
| 5.6.5.2 | Policy | Seek to better integrate the Whistler Creek sub-area, including the Creekside Base, Creekside Village commercial, highway gateway commercial and Lake Placid Road extension, to Nita Lake Lodge. |
| 5.6.5.3 | Policy | Encourage renovation and redevelopment of commercial and multi-family accommodation properties to enhance the attractiveness, character, and experience of this sub-area. |
| 5.6.5.4 | Policy | Consider the potential for multi-family infill housing with increased densities in this sub-area and the adjacent neighborhood to provide needed employee housing and add critical mass to this neighborhood. |
| 5.6.5.5 | Policy | Investigate the potential for Lake Placid Road to evolve into a commercial and residential mixed-use street. |
| 5.6.5.7 | Policy | Support collaborative planning for the Whistler Creek sub-area. |

Furthermore, there are several other OCP goals, objectives and policies that can be addressed and supported by the implementation of a Plan outlined in the Growth Management, Land Use and Development and Transportation sections of the OCP.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The costs associated with the project have been included within the scope of the planning department budget for 2025.

LÍL'WAT 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

The WCW engagement process is aligned with the Consult level of engagement under the International Association for Public Participation's public participation spectrum. At this level, the goal is to seek feedback from the public on analysis, alternatives and decisions. The promise to the public is that they

will be kept informed, their aspirations and concerns will be listened to and acknowledged, and they will receive feedback on how their input influenced the process. While overall the level of engagement for various activities would be consult, some of the activities would be at the level of involve, such as asset mapping, to understand the biggest opportunities and challenges for the neighbourhood.

REFERENCES

Appendix A – Phase 1 Public Engagement Visioning Report

SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the community engagement activities undertaken in the Phase 1 of developing a Plan for WCW and recommends that Council direct staff to proceed with Phase 2 of the process. This report also outlines the Phase 2 community engagement activities proposed are consistent with the Plan process.

SIGN-OFFS

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