



RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

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STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

PRESENTED: April 8, 2025 **REPORT:** 25-019
FROM: Planning – Policy **FILE:** 6480-20
SUBJECT: 2025 OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN AMENDMENT – PROJECT AND
ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council endorse the 2025 Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment project (Project) and engagement approach, as outlined in Administrative Report No. 25-019, required to be completed by December 31, 2025 in accordance with the *Local Government Act* (LGA); and

That Council has considered sections 475 and 476 of the LGA and endorses the early and ongoing consultation for the 2025 OCP Project as outlined in Administrative Report No. 25-019.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present the proposed 2025 Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment project (Project) and engagement approach, initiated to meet new provincial legislative requirements, for Council's consideration. Specifically, this report requests that Council consider sections 475 and 476 of the *Local Government Act* (LGA) and endorse the proposed project and engagement approach. Overall, the 2025 OCP amendment project is designed to achieve three key objectives: 1) meet new provincial legislative requirements; 2) revise the [OCP's Regional Context Statement](#) (RCS) for consistency with the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) Regional Growth Strategy (RGS); and 3) implement identified housekeeping updates (collectively, Three Key Objectives).

Information Report Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

DISCUSSION

Background

The 2025 OCP Project is aimed at achieving the Three Key Objectives. This section provides relevant background information regarding the OCP and each key objective.

Current Official Community Plan

The OCP is the Resort Municipality of Whistler’s (RMOW) most important guiding document that sets the community vision and long-term community direction. The purpose of the OCP is to establish policies that guide decisions on community planning and land use management. “Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2199, 2018” was adopted by Council on June 23, 2020 and is available [online](#).

New Provincial Legislative Requirements

In late 2023, the BC Legislature passed several pieces of legislation with the aim of increasing housing supply across the province. Subsequently, new regulations and policy guidelines were issued changing the local government land use planning framework. To date, the RMOW has taken the following required steps to meet the new legislative requirements:

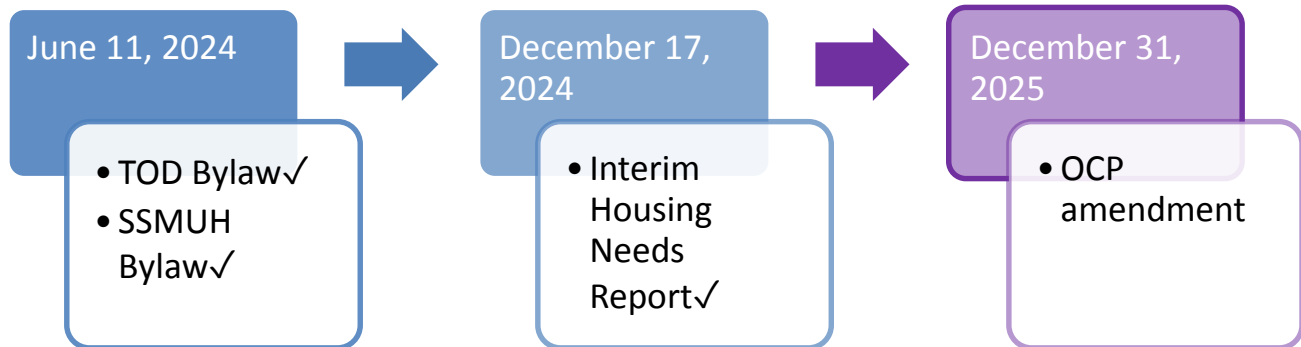
- On [June 11, 2024](#), Council adopted “Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing) No. 2440, 2024” (SSMUH Bylaw), as well as two other associated amendments to “Zoning and Parking Bylaw No. 303, 2015” on [March 11, 2025](#).
 - This allows for three to four dwelling units on residential parcels, where applicable, to encourage infill housing.
- On [June 11, 2024](#), the Whistler Gondola Exchange was designated as a Transit-Oriented Development Area through adoption of the “Transit-Oriented Area Designation Bylaw No. 2442, 2024” (TOD Bylaw).
 - This allows for a minimum height and density to be achieved through rezoning for residential developments within a 200m and 400m radius of the Whistler Gondola Exchange.
- On [December 17, 2024](#), Council received the [Interim Housing Needs Report](#) (IHNR).
 - This identifies the number of housing units legislatively required to meet current and anticipated need in Whistler for the next five and 20 years, as defined by the province:
 - Five years – 1,572 dwelling units; and
 - 20 years – 5,639 dwelling units.

Per provincial legislation, the next required step is for the OCP to be reviewed, and updated as necessary, by December 31, 2025 to:

- Allow for the uses and densities permitted by the SSMUH Bylaw and TOD Bylaw;
- Accommodate the number of housing units identified in the IHNR to meet the 20-year housing need (per section 473.1(3) of the LGA); and
- Include housing policies respecting each class of housing needs required to be addressed in the most recent Housing Needs Report (HNR) (per section 473.1(4) of the LGA):
 - Affordable housing;
 - Rental housing;
 - Special needs housing;
 - Seniors’ housing;
 - Family housing;
 - Shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness and housing for individuals at risk of homelessness; and
 - Housing in close proximity to transportation infrastructure that supports walking, bicycling, public transit or other alternative forms of transport.

With regard to allowing for the uses and densities permitted by the SSMUH Bylaw and TOD Bylaw, typically all bylaws enacted after the adoption of an OCP must be consistent with the OCP (per section 478(2) of the LGA). However, as per sections 788 and 794 of the LGA, and the associated regulations, the SSMUH Bylaw and TOD Bylaw must achieve consistency with the OCP by December 31, 2025.

The following figure summarizes the provincially required legislative steps between 2024 and 2025:



Regional Context Statement

Per section 428(1) of the LGA, the purpose of a RGS is to promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources. The “Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1062, 2008” (RGS Bylaw) was adopted by the SLRD Board of Directors (Board) in June 2010.

As per section 452(2) of the LGA, at least once every five years, the SLRD must consider whether the RGS must be reviewed for possible amendment. As the last RGS review was adopted in 2019, in 2024 the SLRD was required to consider a review of the RGS. As an outcome of the 2024 review, the SLRD proceeded with a minor amendment to the RGS Bylaw.

On September 10, 2024, Council reviewed the proposed SLRD RGS amendment and directed staff to communicate to the SLRD that Council supports the minor amendment and to provide comments regarding proposed Climate Action policies 11.1(a) and 11.2(a) and Affordable Housing Goal 3. The specific comments endorsed by Council are outlined in [Administrative Report No. 24-083](#).

As the outcome of the RGS minor amendment process, on January 29, 2025, the SLRD Board adopted “Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1062, 2008, Amendment Bylaw No. 1872-2024”. The amended RGS includes new policies that are required to be addressed through the regional context statements of member municipalities within the next two years. For example, per Goal 11.2 of the SLRD RGS, member municipalities’ regional context statements are required to identify how local land use, transportation and solid waste policies will contribute to meeting the regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

The RMOW’s current RCS was created for the OCP and is presented in Chapter 1. As described in [Administrative Report No. 24-083](#), by the end of 2025, staff recommend that the RMOW consider making revisions to the RCS associated with the outcomes of the RGS minor amendment, concurrently with OCP amendments to address the new provincial housing legislation through the 2025 OCP amendment project.

Housekeeping Amendments

Since the OCP adoption in 2020, staff have been tracking minor text and mapping housekeeping amendments to be addressed at a future date. The housekeeping amendments are intended to address minor errors and oversights that have come to light since the adoption of the OCP. Staff recommend that these items be addressed concurrently through the 2025 OCP Project.

Analysis

Project Purpose and Anticipated Deliverables

The primary purpose of the 2025 OCP Project is to amend the OCP to meet the new provincial legislative requirements. To ensure the December 31, 2025 deadline is met, the proposed scope of this amendment is focused on meeting the legislated requirements outlined in the Background section of this report. In an effort to find efficiencies, staff recommend concurrently meeting the required RCS updates, as per the SLRD RGS, and addressing outstanding minor housekeeping amendments.

As part of the project process, a comprehensive review and analysis will be completed to further identify and confirm the OCP amendments necessary to adequately address the provincial legislative requirements, RGS requirements and housekeeping amendments. This analysis will be presented to Council concurrently with consideration of first reading of the proposed OCP amendment bylaw. Based on a preliminary review, it is anticipated the OCP amendment will result in the following outputs:

Provincial Legislative Requirements	Anticipated OCP Amendment
Allow for the uses and densities permitted by the SSMUH and TOD Bylaws	Review and update of OCP growth management policies, as required
Accommodate the number of housing units identified in the IHNR to meet the 20-year housing need (section 473.1(3) of the LGA)	
Include housing policies respecting each class of housing needs required to be addressed in the most recent housing needs report (section 473.1(4) of the LGA)	Review and update of OCP housing policies, addressing classes of housing need as required
Regional Growth Strategy Requirements	Anticipated OCP Amendment
Update the RCS as required to align with the new policies in the amended RGS	Review and update of OCP RCS, as required
Housekeeping Amendments	Anticipated OCP Amendment
Address minor text and mapping housekeeping amendments that staff have been tracking since OCP adoption in 2020	Implement OCP housekeeping amendments, including minor mapping and text updates to address minor errors and oversights

Timing and Phases

The project is legislatively required to be completed by December 31, 2025. The project approach has been designed to follow four phases:

- Phase 1: Define – setting-up the project and collecting background information;

- Phase 2: Gather – identifying approaches to address legislative requirements and developing options;
- Phase 3: Narrow Down – refining proposed policies to deliver the project outputs and reflect the Whistler context; and
- Phase 4: Decide – finalizing the proposed bylaw amendments.

Information on each phase is as follows, identifying key tasks associated with each phase.

<p>PHASE 1: DEFINE Jan - April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project kick-off activities • Define project scope • Develop communications and engagement plan • Launch project webpage
<p>PHASE 2: GATHER April - Sept</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early consultation • Review, analysis and initial policy drafting • Public online engagement, including promotion at the June RMOW “Add Your Voice” engagement event • Workshop – housing and service providers • Workshop – Housing and Strategy Committee
<p>PHASE 3: NARROW DOWN –Sept - Oct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop “What We Heard” summary • Draft proposed bylaw amendment • Council consideration first and second readings • Bylaw referrals • Public Hearing
<p>PHASE 4: DECIDE –Oct - Dec</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Hearing Report • Council consideration of third reading • Council consideration of adoption • Information follow-up

Project Consultant

Whistler Centre for Sustainability (WCS) has been retained to support the communications and engagement associated with this project under the direction of RMOW staff. WCS provides local planning and engagement consulting services and has supported several RMOW projects. With direction from RMOW staff, WCS will develop the communications and engagement plan, prepare the project webpage, and design and facilitate the engagement activities.

Future Official Community Plan Amendment

Beyond the provincial legislative requirements, it is anticipated there will be a larger scope OCP review undertaken in the next three to five years. Through this later initiative, it is expected there will be an opportunity for significant public engagement and broader conversations regarding Whistler’s vision as it relates to future growth and density to meet our housing and other community needs.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions

New Provincial Legislative Requirements

[December 17, 2024, Information Report No. 24-109](#): 2024 IHNR

[June 11, 2024, Administrative Report No. 24-064](#): SSMUH Bylaw Report

[June 11, 2024, Administrative Report No. 24-063](#): “Transit-Oriented Designation Bylaw No. 2442, 2024” and “Zoning and Parking Amendment Bylaw (Transit-Oriented Development Area – Residential Parking) No. 2441, 2024”

[February 25, 2025, Administrative Report No. 24-009](#): Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Update Zoning Bylaw Amendments and Enforcement and Ticketing Bylaw Amendments for Statutory Declarations

SLRD RGS Minor Amendment

[September 10, 2024, Administrative Report No. 24-083](#): SLRD – RGS Minor Amendment and RCS

January 29, 2025: SLRD Report: SLRD RGS Review 2024 (Amendment Bylaw No. 1872-2024) – Second Reading, Third Reading and Adoption (may be accessed on SLRD website)

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.

The 2025 OCP Project generally supports the Strategic Plan priority areas of Housing, Climate Action and Community Engagement. Specifically, the project’s community engagement process (described below in the Community Engagement section) aims to contribute to connecting local organizations to each other and the RMOW and contribute to information sharing regarding local government processes and decisions.

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.

This report presents the proposed 2025 OCP Project and engagement approach, initiated to meet new provincial requirements, for Council’s consideration. The relevant context, recommended project approach and engagement, are further discussed throughout this report, particularly in the Background, Analysis, Lílwat Nation and Squamish Nation Considerations and Community Engagement sections.

As noted above, the scope of the 2025 OCP Project is recommended to be limited to meeting the provincial legislative requirements, meeting the SLRD RGS update requirements and addressing minor housekeeping amendments. It is anticipated there will be a larger scope OCP review undertaken in the next three to five years.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

There are no budget considerations. All associated costs with bylaw preparation, consultation and engagement, WCS and legal fees will be covered under the existing Planning Department budget.

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 planning on unceded territories, as currently managed by the provincial government; achieve mutual objectives and enable participation in Whistler’s resort economy. This section identifies areas where RMOW activities intersect with these relationships.

The RMOW is party to the Framework Agreement (FA) that outlines land use considerations associated with Lílwat Nation and Squamish Nation. Specifically, article seven of the FA provides the RMOW with direction in regard to amendments to the OCP including completing early engagement with Squamish Nation and Lílwat Nation, providing them an invitation to review proposed amendments and providing them a reasonable time to undertake this review.

Staff recommend inviting Lílwat Nation and Squamish Nation at the onset of the project process to participate in the early engagement process should they be interested.

Additionally, as per the FA and once the OCP amendment receives first reading, staff will again notify Lílwat Nation and Squamish Nation in writing with a description of the amendment and invite each to confirm in writing, within 30 days, that the amendment does not affect their interests. If either of the First Nations do not agree with this assessment and advises the RMOW in writing within 30 days, staff would initiate a consultation process for the amendment before proceeding with the Public Hearing.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

Inform Consult Involve Collaborate Empower

Legislative Requirements

The following subsection of this report describes the legislatively required consultation requirements and considerations, outlines how the requirements will be met and provides recommendations for Council's consideration.

Section 475 of the LGA requires Council to consider, during the amendment of an OCP, whether the municipality ought to consult on the amendment with persons, organizations or authorities that might be affected, and specifically whether it ought to consult with the following and if so whether opportunities for consultation should be early and ongoing: the SLRD Board; First Nations; Boards of Education, or provincial and federal governments and their agencies. For Council's information and consideration, section 475 of LGA is provided below.

Consultation during development of official community plan

475

- (1) During the development of an official community plan, or the repeal or amendment of an official community plan, the proposing local government must provide one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), the local government must
 - (a) consider whether the opportunities for consultation with one or more of the persons, organizations and authorities should be early and ongoing, and
 - (b) specifically consider whether consultation is required with the following:
 - (i) the board of the regional district in which the area covered by the plan is located, in the case of a municipal official community plan;
 - (ii) the board of any regional district that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;
 - (iii) the council of any municipality that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;
 - (iv) first nations;
 - (v) boards of education, greater boards and improvement district boards;
 - (vi) the Provincial and federal governments and their agencies.
- (3) Consultation under this section is in addition to the public hearing required under section 477 (3) (c).
- (4) If the development of an official community plan, or the repeal or amendment of an official community plan, might affect agricultural land, the proposing local government must consult with the Agricultural Land Commission.

Additionally, section 476 of the LGA specifically requires Council to consult with school districts at the time of amending the OCP, seeking their input on specific matters related to demand on school facilities.

Staff have given consideration to the requirements of sections 475 and 476 of the LGA and recommends that, in addition to the organizations identified below to be invited to a workshop, the SLRD Board, Lílwat Nation, Squamish Nation, and School Districts No. 48 and 93 be invited to participate in the consultation and early engagement process of the 2025 OCP Project, prior to Council's consideration of first reading. This will provide them the opportunity to express if they are interested in participating in Project engagement beyond the bylaw referral and to advise how they would prefer to be consulted.

Staff do not anticipate the project will affect the interests of any adjacent regional district or federal or provincial government department or agency such that any consultation is required with those entities.

Engagement Summary

The following section provides a high-level summary of the proposed project engagement.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the community engagement is to gain feedback on the draft proposed policy approach to identify opportunities to tailor the required amendments to the Whistler context.

Project Webpage

To kick-off the engagement, a Project webpage will be launched with the goal of informing the community of the legislative and RGS requirements, the housekeeping amendments, the bylaw amendment aspects that can be tailored to the Whistler context, how to participate meaningfully in the 2025 OCP amendment engagement process, and the anticipated opportunities to participate in a larger future OCP amendment process.

Early Consultation

As described above, the SLRD Board, Lílwat Nation, Squamish Nation, and School Districts No. 48 and 93 will be notified of the 2025 OCP amendment project and invited to participate in the project engagement. If they are interested in participating in broader project engagement, this early consultation will provide an opportunity for them to identify how they would prefer to be consulted.

Workshops

Under the RMOW's direction, WCS will create and lead a workshop with community partners, housing organizations and service providers, who have an invested interest in supporting the resort community, especially as it relates to housing. In addition to gaining feedback on the proposed policy approach, the workshop aims to support relationship building by bringing organizations together. The following community organizations will be invited to participate:

- Pearl Space;
- Sea-to-Sky Community Services;
- Tourism Whisler;
- Whistler Independent Supportive Housing;
- Whisler Housing Authority;
- Whistler Blackcomb;
- Whistler Chamber of Commerce;
- Whistler Community Services Society;
- Whistler Multi-Cultural Society;
- Whistler Valley Housing Society; and
- Zero Ceiling.

A workshop will also be completed with the RMOW Housing and Strategy Committee.

Public Online Engagement

Beyond the workshops, all members of the public will have the opportunity to participate in the project engagement through online public engagement. Additionally, at the June RMOW "Add Your Voice" in-person event members of the public will be informed of the project scope and opportunities to meaningfully participate in the project online engagement.

Bylaw Referrals

After the proposed OCP amendment receives first and second reading, Staff recommend the 2025 OCP amendment bylaw be referred to the SLRD Board, Lílwat Nation, Squamish Nation and School Districts No. 48 and 93. Additionally, the bylaw will be referred to the community organizations listed above under Workshops.

Public Hearing

As per section 464 of the LGA, a public hearing is required before third reading and adoption of an OCP amendment bylaw. Notice of the public hearing will be issued as per section 466 of the LGA.

Information Follow-up

Following completion of the project, community members will be informed of the decision-making process and final outcome.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the proposed 2025 OCP Project and engagement approach, initiated to meet new provincial legislative requirements, for Council’s consideration. Specifically, this report requests that Council consider section 475 and 476 of the LGA, and to endorse the proposed project and engagement approach described in this Council report. To ensure the December 31, 2025 deadline for completion is met, the scope of the 2025 OCP Project is recommended to be limited to meeting provincial legislative requirements, addressing SLRD RGS RCS update requirements and implementing minor housekeeping amendments. It is anticipated there will be a larger scope OCP review undertaken in the next three to five years.

SIGN-OFFS

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