

**RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER**

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STAFF REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

PRESENTED: July 8, 2025
FROM: Parks Planning
SUBJECT: LOST LAKE DISC GOLF FEASIBILITY STUDY

REPORT: W25-010
FILE: 6120-20

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee of the Whole (COTW) recommend to Council that the Disc Golf Feasibility Study, attached as Appendix A to COTW Report No. W25-010 be presented to Council for endorsement; and

That the COTW recommend to Council that staff be directed to explore external funding opportunities for capital development and annual operating cost for the Disk Golf Course, including grants and sponsorship in accordance with *Council Policy F-31: Sponsorship*.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Disc Golf Feasibility Study (DGFS) and its accompanying recommendations, as well as propose a path forward involving the exploration of external funding sources for capital construction and annual operational maintenance costs.

DISCUSSION

Background

In response to issues of safety, access, trespass, capacity, unauthorized course building, environmental impact, and user experience, the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) initiated the DGFS in 2023. The study is now complete and is attached to this report as Appendix A.

The DGFS purpose was to examine the feasibility and means to address the stated issues at the existing Lost Lake Disc Golf Course (LL Course) and identify a possible alternative or second disc golf course located elsewhere in the Whistler community. The underlying objective is to focus current and future RMOW investment to best address and balance the stated issues and work towards providing a disc golf experience comparable to other municipal recreation offerings.

While disc golf in Whistler has evolved somewhat organically over time and has a much more informal identity when compared to Whistler's otherwise formalized recreational activities, it is an important recreational and social activity for Whistler's residents and guests.

Disc golf appeals to a wide range of ages, skill levels and physical abilities, making it well suited for families and diverse user groups. With low barriers to participation, use has been growing steadily since the course was established in the 1990's and first appeared in the [Recreation and Leisure Master Plan \(page 103\)](#).

The LL Course is unique amongst courses worldwide as it possesses a mix of open and forested play, has a wilderness experience and several holes are truly memorable. Over time issues of safety, access, trespass, capacity, unauthorized course building, environmental impact, wayfinding and decreasing user experience have been identified. These issues require attention through an increased level of formalization, investment and management from the RMOW.

It is also recognized that disc golf is here to stay and efforts to remove or not support disc golf may well result in new concerns and challenges elsewhere in the community in an even less managed and more impactful condition.

Analysis

The RMOW retained three external consultants to provide technical expertise to the project. Through the lenses of environment and disc golf specific needs, the consultants completed an analysis of the existing LL Course and adjacent forested areas of Lost Lake Park as well as seven other potential sites in the community. An on-site Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the existing LL Course and adjacent Lost Lake areas considered for course expansion was completed, and “desktop level” Whistler specific Disc Golf Environmental Suitability and Mitigation Guidelines (DGESMG) were developed. Technical documents produced through this effort were used to inform the recommendations of the study.

The consultant team included the following:

Dialog Design (Dialog)

Dialog's role centered around project leadership and communication and to support INdesign Disc Golf Inc. (INdesign).

Cascade Environmental Resource Group (Cascade)

Cascade led the environmental aspects of the project.

Technical documents produced by Cascade include:

- Environmental Assessment for the LL Course;
- DGESMG;
- Environmental Assessment of Potential Sites;
- EIA: LL Course;
- Analysis of Course Routing Plans for LL Course;

INdesign

INdesign led the disc golf aspects of the project and produced the following technical documents:

- Disc Golf Course Feasibility Report.
- INdesign “Scorecards”; additional course location suitability evaluations.
- Analysis of Course Routing Plans for LL Course.

RMOW staff participated in the project to provide guidance and expertise around various topic areas including:

- **Parks Planning:** project lead.
- **Climate and Environment:** engaged throughout the project, attended site meetings, reviewed guiding and technical environmental documents and provided input from an environmental lens.
- **Park Operations:** manages course maintenance and offered course history, current maintenance practices, observed issues, attended course walkthroughs and offered feedback to course concepts.
- **Communications:** distributed and collected feedback from course users through the online engagement platform Social Pinpoint.
- **Recreation:** provided feedback at various project benchmarks, particularly regarding course routing concepts to ensure no disruptions to Lost Lake's Nordic Trails operations.

Development Scenarios

The technical documents generated three development scenarios. Staff consider the development scenarios to be viable and largely address the DGFS objectives. It is important to note:

- A staff work plan, budget and accompanying funding source(s) for course planning, design and implementation has not been identified.
- Only scenarios that are technically feasible are included.
- Each scenario has its own set of pros, cons, constraints and opportunities.
- Each scenario has varying ability to address stated concerns.
- Each scenario represents a varying amount of environmental impact, and environmental mitigation and protection is necessary for each scenario.
- Several alternative course scenarios are not located on municipally controlled land. Securing access is beyond the scope of this DGFS.
- All scenarios involving the existing LL Course would result in new and rejuvenated disc golf infrastructure including tee boxes, baskets, signage, wayfinding, and support amenities, as well as environmental restoration and protection as outlined in the Cascade technical documents.
- Identification of a scenario in this report is not a commitment to advance it.

Development Scenario 1:

Rejuvenate the existing LL Course within the existing footprint, reducing the course from 27 holes to 18 holes (to add course variety) and one of the following:

- a. Develop a second smaller course near Function Junction; OR
- b. Develop a second larger course in the Whistler Interpretive Forest.

Development Scenario 2:

Reconfigure the existing LL Course and extend to adjacent land to the south connecting to Spruce Grove Park (SGP) and the infrastructure support services it provides.

Development Scenario 3:

Expand the existing LL Course using the existing footprint and expand to land areas to the north and south, connecting with SGP for optimized course play.

Conceptual routing plan graphics for each Development Scenario with advantages and disadvantages can be found within the DGFS, which is attached as Appendix A.

High Level Analysis of Development Scenarios:

Each of the Development Scenario presents a range of considerations with respect to project objectives. These are discussed below.

- *Capacity, Safety, Unauthorized Course Expansion.* Development Scenario 1 requires a second course to address existing issues. Without course expansion either within Lost Lake Park or development of a second course elsewhere in the community, the likelihood of further safety concerns and unauthorized course expansion will increase.
- *Environmental Impact through Lost Lake course expansion.* Development Scenario 2 and 3 represent new environmental impacts to Lost Lake Park. Informed by Cascade's EIA and application of the DGESMG, preliminary course routing plans lessen impacts by utilizing recently and future planned wildfire thinned areas and seasonal Nordic Trails where possible.
- *Land Access.* Development Scenarios 1a and 1b require access to lands not controlled by the RMOW. While a process exists to request access, there is no guarantee that access would be granted.
- *Financial Considerations.* All Development Scenarios require an increase in annual operating and maintenance (O&M) costs to provide a disc golf experience comparable to other municipal recreation offerings (current annual O&M costs are approximately \$5,000/year). Scenarios with expanded and/or new courses would require one-time capital funding to construct.

The DGFS concludes with a recommendation to advance Development Scenario 3 – expand the existing LL Course and extend to connect with SGP and extend north of the existing course.

Moving forward, staff recommend that opportunities for external sponsorship for capital construction and O&M costs be explored in alignment with *Council Policy F-31: Sponsorship* (Appendix B).

Staff first propose to publish an Expression of Interest (EOI) to gauge market conditions and opportunities. Results of the EOI will inform future steps.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions

[October 20, 2015, Administrative Report No. 15-126: Recreation and Lesure Master Plan](#)

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.

Many objectives and goals are in support of or in contrast to the recommendations of this document. That said, balancing recreation with nature is necessary to achieve Whistler's vision of "A place where our community thrives, nature is protected, and guests are inspired."

Recreation and Leisure Master Plan

The recommendations are consistent with the recommended directions of the Council adopted Recreation and Leisure Master Plan (2015) to manage deterioration, conflict, trespass, high use levels, and consideration for a second course.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Due to significant constraints within the RMOW budget, funds have not been allocated to this project at this time.

In the future, if a recommended development scenario is advanced, a budget value of approximately \$400,000 (2025 dollars) would be required for the following:

- Course development;
- Course hardware (e.g., tee pads, baskets, wayfinding);
- Environmental protection and restoration (e.g., delineation and restorative native plantings);
- Professional services and permitting fees; and
- 15 per cent contingency.

In order to fund this project, Staff recommend exploring grant opportunities and sponsorship options in accordance with *Council Policy F-31: Sponsorship*.

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.

A preliminary analysis for the LL Course and potential expansion areas was completed using the provincial "Remote Access to Archaeological Data". Potential archeological features were identified either within the current disc golf course footprint and potential expansion areas or within a 50-metre buffer of the current course footprint and potential expansion areas.

As a Feasibility Study, there are no specific considerations to include in this report. Should this project advance further and into a preferred Development Option, referral submissions will be made to the Líl'wat Nation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

☐ Inform ☒ Consult ☐ Involve ☒ Collaborate ☐ Empower

Given the intent of this project as a feasibility study only, community engagement was limited to a user focused online survey. QR code survey signs were installed on the LL Course for the 2024 season. The survey received approximately 70 responses collecting valuable user perspectives. Detailed survey results can be found in the DGFS.

Over the course of the project, staff have been in contact with the Whistler Disc Golf Club providing updates and opportunities for input. This has also included walking the conceptual course routing and rerouting plans with the consultant team and members of the Parks Planning, Climate and Environment and Resort Operations departments.

Broader community engagement would be included should this project advance further.

REFERENCES

Appendix A – Disc Golf Feasibility Study
Appendix B – *Council Policy F-31: Sponsorship*

SUMMARY

The RMOW has completed a DGFS to address growing concerns at the LL Course, including safety, environmental impact, unauthorized expansion, and user experience.

The DGFS identifies three potential development scenarios in response to stated concerns:

1. Rejuvenate the current LL Course and add a second course elsewhere in Whistler;
2. Rejuvenate the current LL Course and extend to connect to SGP; and

3. Rejuvenate the current LL Course, extend to connect to SGP, and expand to the north.

The DGFS ultimately recommends Development Scenario 3 as the preferred option should the project proceed.

Staff recommend exploring external funding sources, including sponsorships and grants, in line with *Council Policy F-31: Sponsorship*. An Expression of Interest will be issued to assess market opportunities, with findings to be reported back to Council.

The initiative aligns with RMOW's strategic priorities, including climate action and smart tourism. Preliminary community engagement included a user survey and outreach with the Whistler Disc Golf Club. Further community engagement would occur if the project advances, as would project referrals to the Lil'wat Nation.

SIGN-OFFS

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