

SUMMARY AND REVIEW OF PUBLIC HEARING SUBMISSIONS FOR “RZ1165 – CHEAKAMUS CROSSING PHASE 2 – ZONING AMENDMENT BYLAW (CHEAKAMUS CROSSING PHASE 2 PARCELIZATION) NO. 2298, 2020”

A Public Hearing on “RZ1165 – Cheakamus Crossing Phase 2 – Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Cheakamus Crossing Phase 2 Parcelization) No. 2298, 2020” was held on January 26, 2021. The Public Hearing provided an opportunity for members of the public to make verbal representations and submit written comments to Council respecting matters contained in the proposed bylaw.

There were 11 written submissions and 8 verbal representations made by the public as part of the Public Hearing process. A total of 17 members of the public provided representations or submissions, as one member of the public made both written submissions and verbal submissions, and one member of the public spoke twice at the Public Hearing. All submissions were in relation to RZ1165 – Cheakamus Crossing Phase 2 – Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Cheakamus Crossing Phase 2 Parcelization) No. 2298, 2020.

The following provides staff’s summary and review of the written submissions and verbal representations, along with staffs associated recommendations. The summary of the content of the representations and submissions is not intended to transcribe or replicate all of the comments that were made during the Public Hearing process. The written and verbal comments will be collectively referred to as the “submissions” in this summary report.

Public Submissions:

Submissions were made by members of the public living in the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood, elsewhere in Whistler, and from people living outside of Whistler but with an interest in this project, including submissions from members of BC Whitewater, a provincial organization that represents interests of whitewater paddlers in British Columbia.

Comments included the following:

- Concern about the impact of increased automobile traffic on Legacy Way and Mount Fee Road, including concern about vehicle travel speed and pedestrian safety. A related concern raised is the potential for additional congestion at the intersection of Cheakamus Lake Road and Highway 99, due to additional traffic from residents of the Cheakamus Crossing phase 2 developments. It was noted that southbound traffic turning left from Highway 99 onto Cheakamus Lake Road occasionally backs up past the length of the left-turn lane. One submission proposed that primary vehicle access to the Cheakamus Crossing phase 2 neighbourhoods use the West Side Forest Service Road (FSR) to minimize new traffic through the existing Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood.
- Concern that adequate parking is required and provided.
- Questions on the final mix of employee-restricted rental versus for-sale housing, and expressing a preference for more housing for sale. Comments about affordability were also received, expressing concern that the housing be affordable to local workers.
- Comments were submitted relating to sustainability, green building commitments, and GHG emissions. Two submissions including suggestions that natural gas infrastructure be prohibited;

commercial amenities are available within the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood to reduce car dependency.

- Questions about the adequacy of infrastructure to handle additional demand on drinking water and solid and liquid waste, and road infrastructure is adequate for the anticipated additional population.
- Concern was raised about too much of the new housing being added to the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood, and suggestions that new housing be spread more evenly across all neighbourhoods in Whistler.
- Concern that setbacks from the Cheakamus River are adequate to ensure protection of the Riverside Trail and sensitive riparian ecosystem.
- In addition to concerns about noise, safety, and congestion impacts from increased traffic from additional residents in the Upper Lands neighbourhood, several submissions indicated concern with potential noise and safety of construction-related traffic.
- Concern that access to recreational assets in the area is not lost, including to Loggers Lake and the Cheakamus River whitewater run. Paddlers submitted that access to the Upper Cheakamus put-in be maintained, and concern that traffic from kayakers on Mount Fee Road through the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood might be opposed by future residents. Some submissions suggested adding a vehicle connection to the FSR at the Cloudburst Drive and Mount Fee Road intersection.
- The whitewater community also suggested investigating the feasibility of creating access points to the Upper Cheakamus River from the Eastside FSR.
- Requests that the construction schedule and related road closures or other impacts are communicated to the public.
- Concern about the impacts increasing popularity of recreation and associated traffic, parking, garbage, and dog waste.

Staff Review:

Staff analysis determined that the submissions communicate key issues as follows: impact of increased population in Cheakamus Crossing including traffic congestion and safety; sustainability commitments of the proposed development; tenure and affordability of proposed housing; minimizing impacts on the environment and sensitive ecosystems; impact of the development on access to recreational assets (Cheakamus River and Loggers Lake) and conversely, impact of increased interest in recreation on the neighbourhood; concern about proper permitting of current site work; emergency access/egress; and adequacy of municipal infrastructure to serve the proposed development.

Density

The design seeks to optimize land utilization, delivery of employee housing, and building efficiency, with development form that fits and is complementary to the surrounding natural context. The proposed rezoning is consistent with the principal growth management policies of the Official Community Plan, including the Whistler Urban Development Containment Area, the Whistler Land Use Map and Designations and Bed Unit Capacity limit.

The location of the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood was determined through a community engagement process conducted as part of the Whistler 2020 strategic community planning initiative.

The Cheakamus Crossing site was selected as it adhered to smart growth principles, located adjacent to Whistler's existing urban development area and connecting to existing infrastructure. The Cheakamus Crossing lands were granted to the Municipality as part of the Community Land Bank granted by the Province for employee housing as a legacy of the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the Upper Lands represent a planned expansion of the neighbourhood.

The proposed zoning sets out regulations for building heights, density, setbacks and other zoning parameters, developed through comprehensive planning process and site development concepts. The proposed zoning density is consistent with the maximum density permitted under the current zoning.

The Municipal bed unit inventory has an allocation of 1,540 bed units for the Upper Lands. Applying the OCP bed unit calculations to the current proposed parcel development concepts and zoning, Parcels A, B/C, D1, D2, and D3 have potential for a total of 902 bed units, leaving a residual allocation of 638 bed units for potential Parcel E development. Parking will be required as per the Zoning and Parking Bylaw.

Building setbacks have been established to be responsive to integrating the developments within the forested landscape, incorporating expanded setbacks for naturalized landscape buffers along Mount Fee Road frontages, separation and buffering to protect the Cheakamus River corridor and Riverside trail experience, and separation between the development parcels and individual buildings. A well-sized common open space area, which will feature a neighbourhood park, is centrally located and provides trail access to the Riverside Trail.

Traffic Congestion and Safety

The Mount Fee road extension is designed to municipal standards, including an extension of the Valley Trail. The road is also designed for an extension of bus service to the new development parcels, with two bus stops, each with a bus shelter. The existing local road system for the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood was designed for, and has the capacity for the proposed development.

Impacts on traffic congestion and safety on Highway 99 will in part be mitigated by the availability of transit service and by the Valley Trail connection. The potential for neighbourhood-serving convenience retail, services, and amenities within the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood and Function Junction will be further supported by the additional development.

A construction management plan has been developed to avoid impacts on the local road system in the existing neighbourhood, including use of the Forest Service Road for construction traffic.

Industrial traffic, including logging trucks, will be re-routed through a new quarry access route after the re-alignment of the FSR. The new quarry access will only be open to industrial traffic, not for the public, and will primarily be located on existing forest service roads with a new 100 metre road segment to connect from the quarry to the existing road system.

Current Site Work

Ongoing site work including tree clearing is associated with development that is permitted under the existing UR1 zoning, and has been authorized by approved Development Permit.

Tenure of housing and affordability

The proposed rezoning will enable the subdivision and phased development of the lands for employee housing, with a limited amount of market housing proposed to financially support the development of affordable employee housing. Overall, the development parcels provide for a diversity of housing forms with a mix of apartments, townhouses, and duplex and detached dwellings, with opportunities for both ownership and rental housing. The final mix of rental and ownership is yet to be determined, and the proposed zoning provides flexibility for both rental and ownership.

Mix of uses

No commercial use is contemplated for the Cheakamus Crossing Upper Lands phase 2 development. There is potential for daycare to be integrated within the development concepts. The neighbourhood is connected to businesses in Function Junction and Whistler Creek and Whistler Village by the Valley Trail and local transit. The development of the Upper Lands will further contribute to the critical mass of the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood needed to support commercial food and beverage uses located within the neighbourhood. Planning for these uses within the existing neighbourhood area and the Cheakamus “Lower Lands” is included within the Planning Department Work Program.

Sustainability

The development will adhere to the Municipality’s policies and initiatives related to community energy and GHG emissions, water conservation, and solid waste management. A green building covenant is a required condition of rezoning approval, and staff is engaged with the developer to finalize commitments to sustainability. Buildings will be required to meet or exceed the Municipality’s progressive Step Code requirements.

A covenant requires all parcels to connect to the Cheakamus Crossing District Energy System (DES) for hot water heating, with space heating by electric baseboard heaters. Natural gas connection to the buildings is required and will be utilized on a limited basis to supplement hot water heating requirements and as backup to the DES for hot water heating. The DES may not be compatible with the single family and duplex dwellings contemplated for Parcel D3, as hook-up and operating costs are relatively higher, and overall energy efficiency gains are less than in multi-family buildings. The DES has been working well in multi-family and apartment buildings in Cheakamus Crossing.

Transit service and the Valley Trail extension support GHG emissions reduction. Landscape plans will be assessed against water needs, and buildings will provide required facilities to address recycling and solid waste diversion.

Protection of Environment and Sensitive Ecosystems

At the time of development, development permit requirements and guidelines for protection of riparian ecosystems and protection of sensitive ecosystems will also apply. The development permit approvals provide the opportunity to register site specific environmental monitoring plans and adherence to Provincial Riparian Area Protection Regulations during construction. The environmental protection covenants provide for protection in perpetuity and link to the municipality’s environmental protection bylaws, and are a condition of zoning adoption.

Access

As a result of this development, access to the House Rock parking area will not change. However, the Westside FSR past Parcel A will be discontinued, and new access will be provided to Loggers Lake and beyond via the new Mount Fee road extension. Recreation users will continue to have vehicular access to Loggers Lake, Cheakamus River and the trail system by way of the Mount Fee Road extension, and parking will be accommodated at the top of the Mount Fee Road extension. The extension of Mount Fee Road connecting the Upper Lands development parcels has been designed to municipal standards and has been approved under Development Permit 1760.

Adding an additional road connection to the FSR at the Cloudburst Drive/Mount Fee Road intersection is not feasible due to the location of hydro infrastructure and the location of future buildings as it relates to the existing FSR alignment.

Emergency Access/Egress

The Westside FSR provides a secondary emergency access/egress point. Gated connections from the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood will be maintained, and can be opened to facilitate neighbourhood evacuation if necessary.

Infrastructure

The Parcel A lands are located within the municipality's service areas for water, sewer, and fire service, and are within the District Energy expansion area. Costs for all onsite infrastructure, and park and trail improvements, are to be paid by the development.

The applicant civil engineer, Webster Engineering, has developed complete servicing plans consistent with municipal standards for subdivision approval. These have been reviewed by Infrastructure Services, and no concerns have been identified. All municipal systems have been reviewed and are capable of serving the full potential development for the Upper Lands.

Public Communication

Construction status and updates will be maintained on the RMOW website. Notices and alerts will also be communicated via social media channels where necessary.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff do not recommend any changes on the Public Hearing comments. Staff recommend that the proposed bylaw be given third reading without further revision to "RZ1165 – Cheakamus Crossing Phase 2 – Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Cheakamus Crossing Phase 2 Parcelization) NO. 2298, 2020" based on the Public Hearing comments. Staff recommend that the proposed bylaw be given third reading without further revision.