

Community Excellence Awards

2018 Application Form

Please complete and return the application form by Friday, May 25, 2018. All questions are required to be answered by typing directly in this form. If you have any questions, contact awards@ubcm.ca or (250) 356-5193.

SECTION 1: Applicant Information

Local Government: Resort Municipality of Whistler

Complete Mailing Address: 4325 Blackcomb Way, Whistler, B.C. V0N 1B4

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Position: Communications Officer

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SECTION 2: Category

- ☒ **Excellence in Governance.** *Governance processes or policies that are outcomes-based and consensus oriented; support and encourage citizen participation in civic decision-making; are efficient, equitable and inclusive, open and transparent; and exemplify best practices in accountability, effectiveness, and long term thinking.*
- ☐ **Excellence in Service Delivery.** *Projects/programs that provide effective services in a proactive manner, demonstrate benefit to the community, and utilize performance measures, benchmarks and standards to ensure sustainable service delivery.*
- ☐ **Excellence in Asset Management.** *Projects/programs that demonstrate a comprehensive system of asset management policies and practices, meeting and/or exceeding accepted best practices.*
- ☐ **Excellence in Sustainability.** *Projects/programs that incorporate a long-term sustainability lens by considering cultural, social, economic and environmental issues in planning, policy and practice.*

SECTION 3: Project/Program Details

1. Name of the Project/Program:

Affordable Housing Program

2. Project/Program Summary. Please provide a summary of your project/program in 150 words or less.

Affordable housing is one of the Whistler community's biggest current concerns. In 2016, as part of Whistler's Affordable Housing Program a Task Force on Resident Housing was formed. The task force has the clear and ambitious goal to facilitate the creation of more than 1000 resident-restricted beds within five years. Decision-making has been driven first and foremost by the involvement of community stakeholders. Through this collaboration, a multi-pronged approach was recommended to address the diverse current realities of Whistler's resort partners, local businesses, Whistler's workforce and residents. Over the past two years, several recommendations were adopted including building resident-restricted housing on municipal lands; the Home Run program, matching resort businesses with property owners; and a review of residential home use for Tourism Accommodation. Most recently an infill housing strategy and review process for private resident-restricted housing proposals were also adopted moving the program closer to its 1000 bed target.

3. Demonstrating Excellence. Please describe how your project/program demonstrates excellence in meeting the purposes of local government in BC and provides promising practices for others to follow.

The RMOW showed how a municipality can be a community leader when tackling complex community issues. This program brought together community stakeholders and community-wide collaboration resulting in a broad understanding of community needs and tailored recommendations which have resulted in participatory decision-making.

The clear, ambitious but achievable objective of 1000 new resident-restricted beds was set within this program. The task force outlined seven clear recommendations that directly aligned to the diverse needs of the community. They are:

- Tourist Accommodation Review to ensure residential homes are not being used for nightly rental.
- Home Run Program to match resort businesses with property owners.
- Update the Employee Housing Service Charge Bylaw to ensure commercial, industrial and tourist accommodation developments are contributing appropriately towards new employee housing.
- Build additional resident-restricted housing inventory for the Whistler Housing Authority.
- Allow private development of resident-restricted rentals on underdeveloped private lands.
- Consider infill housing opportunities.
- Refine resident-restricted eligibility and enforcement.

As such, the community, community partners and the RMOW are clear in how decisions are being made in the overall picture, with the example of rezoning applications when related to projects that will assist with the creation of employee housing.

The scope of information gathered from the community, stakeholders and studies provided a promising community-engagement practice that the RMOW itself has already utilized again in other projects, one such being the renewal of Whistler's Community

Vision and Official Community Plan. The methods used to collect information and involve the community was fundamental to the development of recommendations and stakeholder involvement in the program.

This program addresses both current concerns while also setting up important frameworks for Whistler's long-term vision. All work undertaken is also done so with the Whistler2020 Community Vision in mind. It is set to be a legacy for the community as Whistler continues to be a place the people love to live, work and visit.

4. Category Criteria.

A. Please describe how your project/program meets the objectives of the category you have applied under. Refer to S. 3 of the Program & Application Guide.

The creation of a task force was a pivotal decision in addressing the issue of affordable housing in Whistler. The task force was launched with a third party conducted, statistically relevant community survey and community forum to have citizen participation at the forefront of decision-making for affordable housing recommendations moving forward.

The community survey on housing needs garnered more than 2295 respondents, representing more than 25% of Whistler's adult population. It was the highest response rate for an RMOW survey. The community forum had more than 300 attendees.

Many of the insights provided by the community were utilized through the creation of the recommendations and ultimately resulted in Council adoption.

Extensive work was undertaken at the beginning of the program to conduct and review housing studies and insights. These included a review of current tourist accommodation properties, policies and regulations and analysis of current neighbourhood character and development trends to better understand the effects of current construction, redevelopment, home sales and migration, supply of developable lots and zoning regulations.

Local organizations community studies such as the Whistler Housing Authorities Employer Housing Needs Assessment, Whistler Chamber of Commerce Working in Whistler Survey and Communities that Care's Young Adult report were also reviewed.

One of the program objectives is to continue to refine the housing mix acknowledging the different household needs and financial considerations when looking at affordability. Because of the diversity of Whistler's resident population, affordability varies between household groups. Census data was utilized to identify different groups and tailor housing approaches to their needs.

There was always a clear objective to create more than 1000 resident-restricted houses by 2022. A clear direction was set to leverage collaborative interest and involvement of all community stakeholders and prioritize housing initiatives. This has resulted in an outcomes-based plan with representatives comprising the Resort Municipality of Whistler, Tourism Whistler, Whistler Blackcomb, the Whistler Chamber of Commerce, Whistler Housing Authority, Hotel Association of Whistler, Restaurant Association of Whistler and community members.

The five-year objective ensures accountability and action while the recommendations provide long-term approaches to affordability housing strategies in 2022 and beyond.

B. In many cases projects may meet the criteria of more than one category. If applicable, please describe how your project meets the criteria of one or more other categories.

SECTION 4: Program Criteria

- 5. Leadership.** Describe the extent to which your local government acted as a local or regional leader in the development or implementation of the project/program.

In 2017, hotel occupancy rates in Whistler were growing with 3.3 million annual visitors, residential property values had grown by 22%, population growth continued with a particular growth in families and there was 14,500 employees as part of Whistler's seasonal employee and resident mix. At this same time, there was a decline in the workforce living locally.

There is no one solution to the complex issue surrounding affordable housing. However it was clear that for an affordable housing program to be successful it needed to have collaboration from community members, local businesses, industry leaders and resort partners.

The RMOW led this process through the creation of the housing task force. It brought together local stakeholders with committee representation from CEOs, chairs and executive directors from the Whistler Housing Authority, Whistler Housing Authority Board, Hotel Association of Whistler, Restaurant Association of Whistler, Real Estate Association of Whistler, Whistler Association of Retailers and Merchants, Whistler Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Whistler, Whistler Blackcomb and Whistler Community Services Society.

The RMOW positioned itself as the leader bringing together these key stakeholders and community members. RMOW staff tabulated feedback from the community, study reviews and input from the task force to form recommendations for Council decision-making that reflected the needs of the Whistler community.

Throughout the implementation of the recommendations from the task force the RMOW has led by example in the provision of municipal land for developments and proactive changes to bylaws and development processes.

The process to gather community input and combine with task force and staff expertise provides a model for other municipalities when addressing complex issues, such as housing. The recommendations of the task force are tailored to the needs of Whistler but show innovative and effective practices in a multi-pronged approach to housing.

- 6. Partnerships and collaboration.** Describe the breadth and depth of community and/or regional partnerships that supported the project/program and the extent to which internal and/or external collaboration was evident.

Partnerships are a fundamental part of the collaborative approach of this program. As outlined in the above, the task force was made up of a wide range of key community stakeholders. The participation of senior members of these community partners aided

the prioritization of affordable housing across local businesses, organizations and associations.

One of the recommendations of the task force focuses on supporting partnership with the building industry. In May, Council endorsed a process that will be used to review proposals for the development of resident-restricted housing on private lands that may be currently underdeveloped. This process was introduced to manage broad interest in the development of resident-restricted rental properties on private lands in Whistler. A variety of development proposals are expected, from employer-provided dormitory style accommodations for seasonal staff housing to multi-family residences.

Active rezoning proposals that incorporate employee housing will be incorporated into this review process to ensure all employee housing development proposals are considered equally. This encourages positive collaboration for industry that supports community-priorities, like housing.

This program also relies on the strong partnership of the Whistler Housing Authority (WHA). The WHA is an independent municipally-owned corporation of the RMOW created to oversee the development, administration and management of resident-restricted housing in Whistler. The WHA was formed 20 years ago and the partnership of this independent organization provided a holistic approach to housing and long-term planning.

The WHA has been awarded with CMHC Housing Awards for Best Practices in Affordable Housing, FCM Sustainable Community Award for the Cheakamus Crossing Legacy Neighbourhood and Georgie Award's for Excellence in Local Government Cooperation with Industry and Excellence in Public-Private Partnerships in Creating Affordable Housing. The partnership with WHA ensured that best practices and insights were shared to this program for the most effective results for the Whistler community.

7. Innovation and promising practices. Describe the degree to which the project/program demonstrated creativity and innovation, and contributed to increased efficiency or effectiveness.

In March, RMOW Council approved one of the task force recommendations strategy to promote infill housing. The strategy anticipates policy and bylaw changes that will enable eligible residential property owners to develop a number of different infill housing types including stratified suites, additional suites, small lot subdivisions and duplexes.

This strategy utilises existing properties as an efficient and innovative way to add to the creation of new bed units in Whistler. It is an effective option in directly addresses the variety of housing and affordability requirements for different groups within the community.

The infill housing strategy was formed after community engagement indicated that the community strongly supported improved utilization of existing homes and residential lands for addressing housing issues in Whistler. It is a promising practice with bylaw amendments and policy changes that provide a format for other municipalities.

8. Public engagement and communications. Describe the extent to which public engagement was foundational to the success of the project/program, including the use of communication tools such as social media.

One of the first steps of the program was undertaking a community survey and community forum, which as previously mentioned resulted in 2,295 respondents or more than 25% of the adult population of Whistler. It was one of the fundamental components of the program.

The choice was made to do this via a third party conducted and statistically relevant survey. Two forms of outreach were employed to maximize stakeholder involvement in the survey and two forms of the survey were utilized. The survey ensured that it covered two important respondent types for Whistler's resident mix of a) Workforce, including: people who work in Whistler and who are permanent residents, seasonal residents or people who commute to Whistler for work but live in other community and b) Non-workforce, including: people who own property in Whistler but do not work in Whistler. The clear definition of respondent groups ensured the true mix of housing needs were considered and represented throughout decision-making in the program.

The method for gathering input was also split over computer assistant telephone interviews for a random collection base of participants as well as intercept methodology where 365 in-person surveys were conducted at high-traffic locations and different times of day throughout Whistler. This mix ensured barriers like lack of home phone lines or being out of the house at the time of call were addressed.

Following the success of these engagement techniques has been utilized by the RMOW again in other programs and projects.

The community survey and community forum found that in addressing Whistler's housing concerns the community strongly supported:

- Additional allocation of employee bed units
- Densification in residential neighbourhoods
- Improved utilization of existing homes and residential lands

The influence of this community feedback can be seen through all of the recommendations and notably the infill housing strategy, private resident-restricted developments for dorm style accommodation, the ongoing partnership with WHA and the Home Run program.

Other trends in the feedback indicated that it was most important that the timeline for implementation actions was as quick as possible and that numbers of beds be realized from each initiative.

This formed the clear five-year implementation timeline and the tiered approach of implementation. Actions were put into place within months of the creation of the task force. The increased enforcement of illegal resident housing for Tourism Accommodation was one such immediate action.

The community is promptly updated of developments as Council adopts recommendations via press releases and public channels like the RMOW's Facebook and Twitter accounts and community newsletter. These updates receive high levels of community engagement as the community remain actively invested in updates to the program. Updates and information are also shared in a clear and easy to understand manner on the RMOW's website.

- 9. Transferability.** Describe the degree to which the process or outcomes of the project, or other learnings, could be conveyed to other UBCM members.

Methodology used for the community engagement in this program provide models that can be conveyed with other UBCM members. The well formulated third-party conducted community survey showed as it received the highest number of survey respondents in Whistler to date.

The task force creation and collaboration with community stakeholders also serves as a format for ensuring community-wide involvement. This was led effectively as can be seen by the participation of highest level players in key community businesses and organizations.

SECTION 5: Additional Information

- 10.** Please share any other information you think may help support your submission.

Webpage outlining the affordable housing recommended actions:

<https://www.whistler.ca/services/housing>

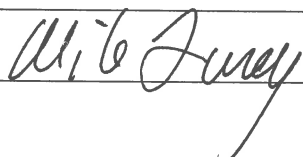
SECTION 6: Signature

Applications are required to be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant.

Name: Mike Furey

Title: Chief Administrative Officer

Signature:



Date: 5/25/2018

All applicants are required to submit:

- Signed application form. Applications should be submitted as Word or PDF files.
- Five representatives photos of the project. Photos should be submitted as JPEG files.

If you choose to submit your application by e-mail, hard copies do not need to follow.

Submit applications to Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities

E-mail: awards@ubcm.ca

Mail: 525 Government Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 0A8