

40 Years:

A Brief History of Whistler -

The Role of Long Term Planning

Colorado Association of Ski Towns

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RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

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Presentation overview

- Whistler's unique history
- Building of Whistler
- Premise, purpose and thinking behind resort development
- The Village, Whistler's central commercial hub
- Resort success: attractions, recreation
- Local housing
- Questions

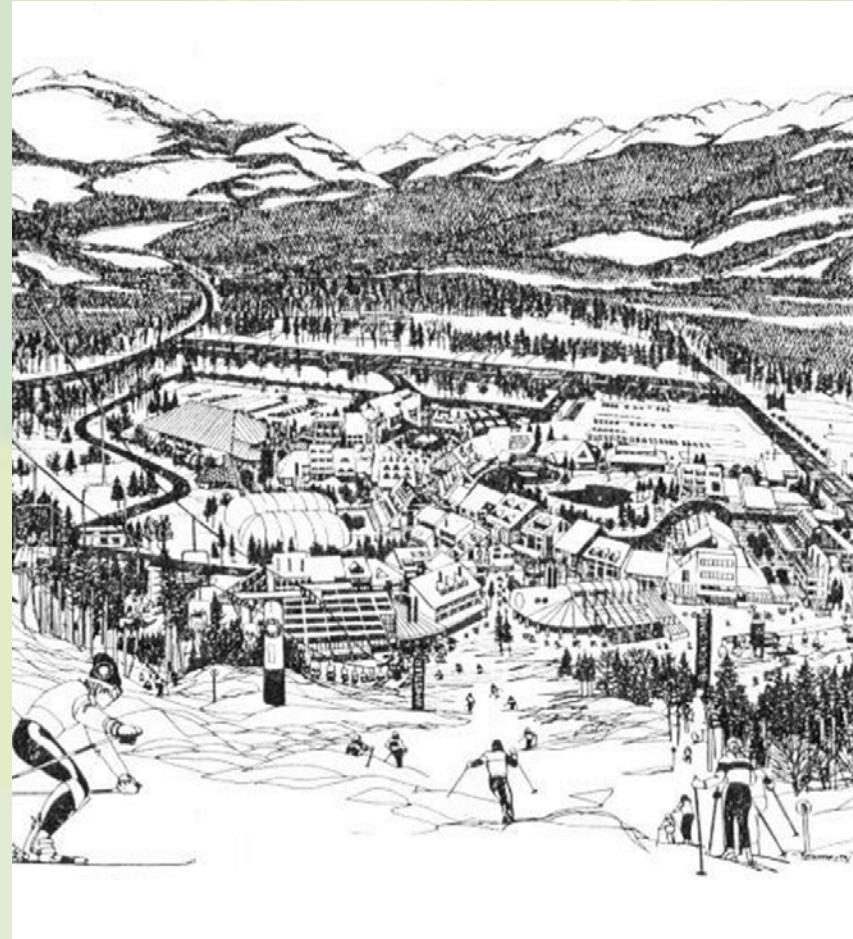
Whistler's unique history

- **1914:** pioneers Myrtle and Alex Philip built Rainbow Lodge
- **1940s:** most popular honeymoon spot in Western Canada
- **1960s:** bid for Winter Olympics, developed Whistler Mountain
- **1966:** Provincial government builds highway Squamish to Whistler,
- **1965/66:** Garibaldi Lift Co. opens Whistler Mountain, Population 527



Whistler's unique history

- **1975:** RMOW incorporated – first designated resort municipality, population <1,000
- Vision to build a four-season mountain resort
- **1979:** Whistler Village construction commences
- **1980:** Intrawest opens Blackcomb Mountain
- **1989:** Whistler Village expansion (Village North) commences
- **2010:** Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games



Development: Premise, purpose and thinking

- Whistler Village development
 - ✓ Provincial Government provided 21.5 hectares (53 acres) of Crown Land to develop town centre
 - ✓ Whistler and Province involved in development of Whistler Village
 - ✓ Eldon Beck engaged in Whistler Village plan design
- Whistler Village location
 - ✓ Decision to locate at the base of Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains
 - ✓ Decision to focus future commercial growth in this location



Development: Premise, purpose and thinking

- Single “Town Centre”
 - ✓ Central location at the base of Whistler Mountain and Blackcomb Mountain
- Lively pedestrian-oriented Village
- Local craftsmen with local materials
- Village Master Plan
 - ✓ Massing, solar analysis, views, focus points, mixed use
- Stringent design guidelines
 - ✓ Site planning, architectural design, building finishes, landscape, parks and trails



Development: Premise, purpose and thinking

- Whistler Village design

- ✓ Harmony with local surroundings
- ✓ Car-free
- ✓ Encourages people to meet and meander
- ✓ Always in sight of one magnificent view or another





Village character





Development: Premise, purpose and thinking

- Accommodation Management
- Official Community Plan
 - ✓ Limits growth
- Zoning Bylaw
 - ✓ Residential vs tourist accommodation
- Warm Bed Strategy
 - ✓ Addresses second homeowner properties often left vacant – dark windows in village core
 - ✓ Promotes a vibrant village core and retail sector - guests have best access to Mountain
 - ✓ Established by two key **property covenants**
 - One requires select property to be available for rent when the owner is absent
 - Second limits owner use to 28 nights in winter and 28 in summer (most hotels in village)





Development: Premise, purpose and thinking

- Hotels not enough – had to build resort experience
- Innovative infrastructure funding
 - ✓ Initially infrastructure funded through development charges tied to rezoning.
 - ✓ With each rezoning application, the municipality negotiated additional benefits for the resort community.



Resort success: attractions, recreation

- Year-round appeal
- Whistler Blackcomb
 - ✓ 2015 SKI Magazine readers rank #1 in North America – again
 - ✓ Product development – variety of terrain, terrain parks, P2P Gondola, bike park, hiking, third party tours
- Whistler Village
- Festivals, Events and Animation Program
 - ✓ Home grown events
 - ✓ Third party events
 - ✓ Drive off peak visitation
- Whistler Olympic Plaza, Audain Art Museum



Resort success: attractions, recreation

- Recreation centre
- Recreation programming
- Trails
 - ✓ Hiking , Biking, Walking, Running
 - ✓ Cross Country, Snowshoeing
 - ✓ 40-kilometre Valley Trail network connects Village and neighbourhoods
- Access to lakes, public beaches
- Three golf courses
- Conference business (Whistler Conference Centre)





Local housing

- Since 1979, Whistler has pursued a variety of initiatives to enhance affordability and achieve its goal to house 75% of its workforce locally.
- Whistler Housing Authority, subsidiary of RMOW, oversees 62 resident-restricted locations
 - ✓ Makes up about 12% of total housing in Whistler
 - ✓ About 6,000 permanent and seasonal Whistler residents live in employee-restricted housing that they own or rent at controlled rates
 - ✓ 79% of Whistler's workforce is currently housed within Whistler's municipal boundaries



Today and beyond

- Year round success
 - ✓ Diverse product offering
 - ✓ Diverse geographic segments
- Successful resort community
- Importance of reinvention and reinvestment
 - ✓ Resort Rejuvenation Initiative – innovate policies to attract re-investment in aging infrastructure in Whistler Village
- Official Community Plan
 - ✓ limits growth and identifies future land use and development



Successful resorts



“Successful resorts understand the importance of the resort experience and the interplay of the natural environment, history, regional culture, shopping, architecture, arts and culture, food, sport, recreation, leisure, romance and group and family experience.”
~Eldon Beck

Questions?



www.whistler.ca