



Resort Municipality of
WHISTLER

2021 HOUSING SURVEY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MAY 2022

THE 2021 HOUSING SURVEY

In December 2021, the Resort Municipality of Whistler engaged Forum Research Inc. to conduct a market residential Housing Survey.

The survey results will help the RMOW understand:

1. The current and future **availability of housing for the resort's workforce** to inform future supply that may be needed; and
2. The **frequency of use by Whistler's vacation or second homeowners** (SHO) to assist in planning services and infrastructure for the whole community.

16%

Response Rate

This survey was sent to nearly 8000 addresses, and garnered almost 1300 responses in 4 weeks*

Owners of residential properties were asked:

- If their Whistler property is their **usual place of residence**,
- If it is not their usual place of residence, how **they currently use their property**,
- If their property has **a secondary suite** and how it is used,
- If any members of the residence are **employed in Whistler's resort economy**,
- If they **expect to change** the way they use their property and secondary suite in the near future, and
- How **frequently they visit Whistler**, and if they expect this to change in the next 5 years.

Owners of employee-restricted properties and tourist accommodations were not included in this survey, as employee housing use is sourced from Whistler Housing Authority, while exclusive Tourist Accommodations uses do not permit residential use.

* This implied a **Margin of error (moe)** of 2.3%. The moe determines the accuracy of survey results when applied to the total population – therefore survey results are likely within 2.3% of the results we would get if we surveyed all 8000+ properties.



Highlights & Takeaways

How are Whistler market properties* used?

*Market properties refers to all properties with residential zoning, including a portion that allow both residential and tourist use.

32%
RESIDENT
OWNED AND
OCCUPIED

10% RESIDENT
OCCUPIED
(VIA RENTALS)

58%
NOT RESIDENT
OWNED OR
OCCUPIED
(I.E. OWNED BY SECOND
HOMEOWNERS OR PART-TIME
RESIDENTS)

42%
OCCUPIED
BY A RESIDENT

Properties that only permit residential use
= **51% RESIDENT OCCUPIED.**

Properties that permit both residential
and tourist accommodation
= **27% RESIDENT OCCUPIED.**

The majority of these properties
are used personally by the
owners, who visit on a weekly
or monthly basis



49 DAYS
PER WINTER SEASON

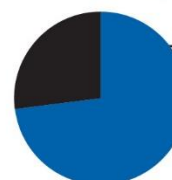


33 DAYS
PER SUMMER SEASON

52%
expect to visit even
MORE FREQUENTLY
in the coming 5 years



1 in 4
PROPERTIES
REPORTED HAVING A
**SECONDARY
SUITE**



73%

ARE OCCUPIED BY
**WHISTLER
WORKFORCE**

These secondary suites account
for the majority (**65%**) of market
rental units in Whistler.

20%

OF ALL PROPERTIES ARE
**OCCUPIED BY
AN EMPLOYEE
OF WHISTLER'S
RESORT-BASED ECONOMY**

SURVEY REPRESENTATION



The distribution of survey respondents aligns closely to that of all residential property owners in Whistler – implying a high degree of confidence when making conclusions about the utilization of residential properties.

Figure 1: Survey Representation by Origin (Owner’s Listed Address)

According to the listed addresses of the properties, the distribution of homeowners in the survey sample matches closely to that of all market residential homeowners in Whistler.

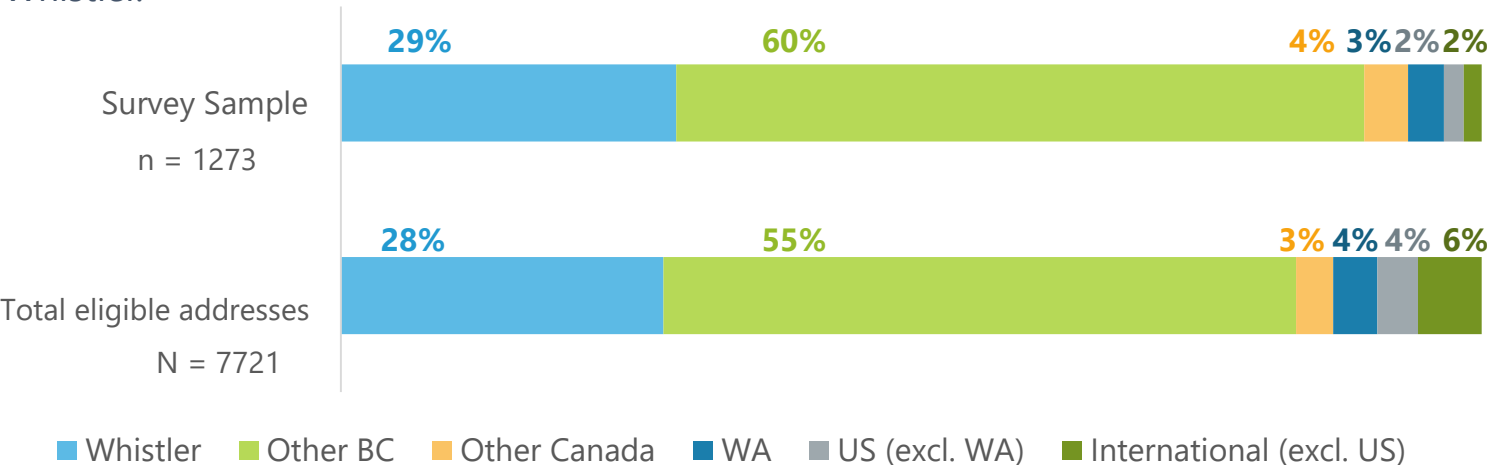
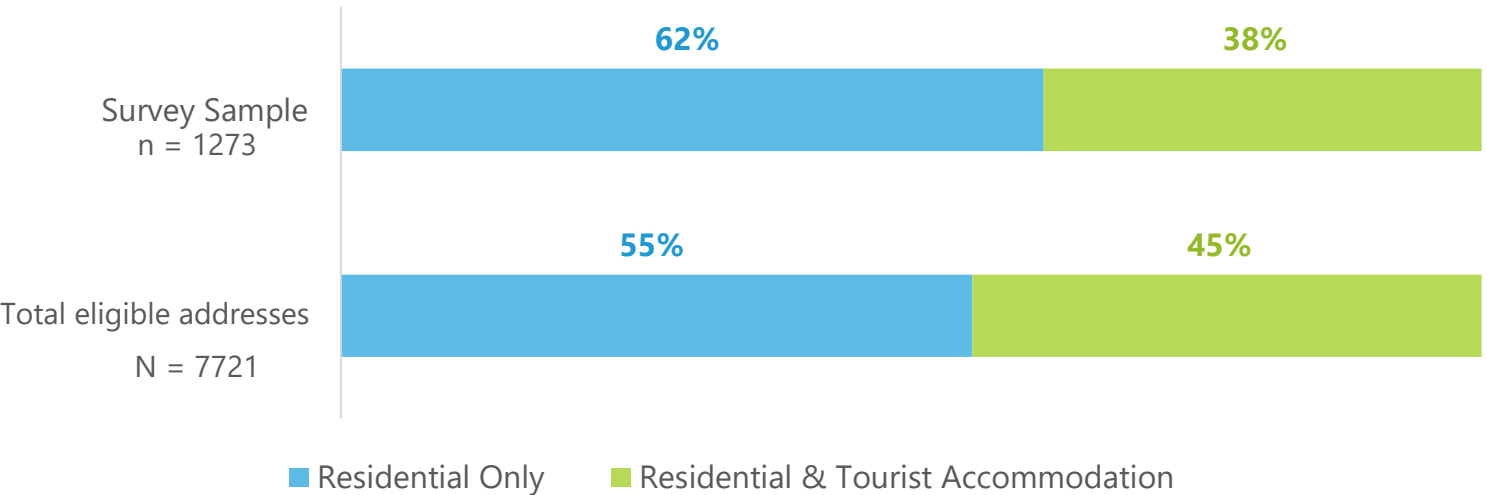


Figure 2: Survey Representation by Property Use

The survey sample had a slightly higher proportion of responses from residential-only properties as compared with properties that allow both residential and tourist uses.

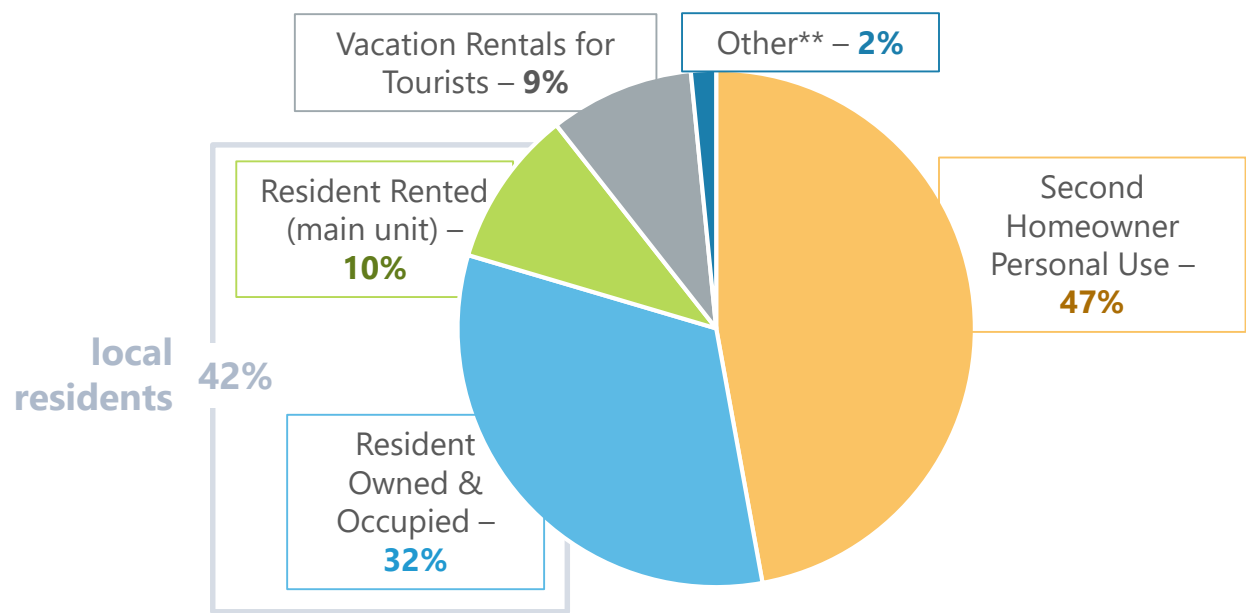


REPORTED PROPERTY USES



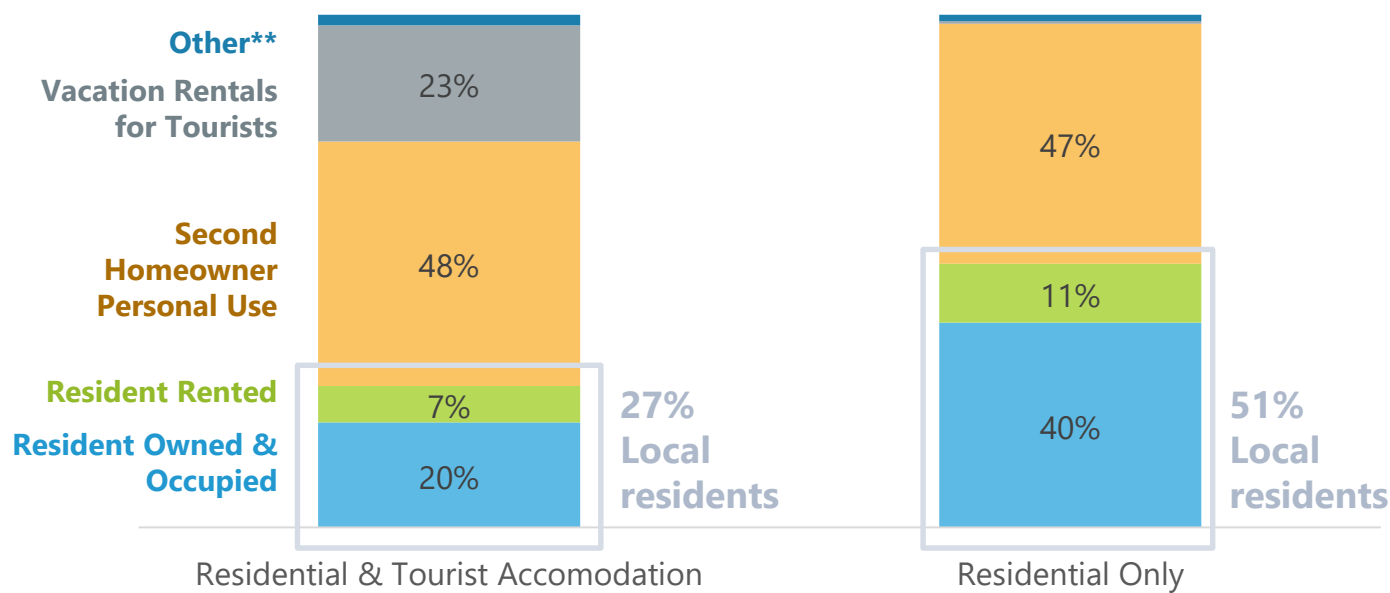
Overall, about 40% of properties surveyed were reported to be occupied by a local resident (owned or rented).

Figure 3: Property Uses*, Percent of all Properties Surveyed



Properties that only allow residential use were almost twice as likely to be occupied by a resident, compared to those that allow both residential and tourist accommodations.

Figure 4: Property Uses*, Percent of all Properties Surveyed by Permitted Uses



* Owners were asked about the primary use of their properties for each of the Winter 20/21, Summer 21, Winter 21/22, and Summer 22 seasons – as there was almost no change in property use by season, the reported uses for Winter 20/21 are depicted.

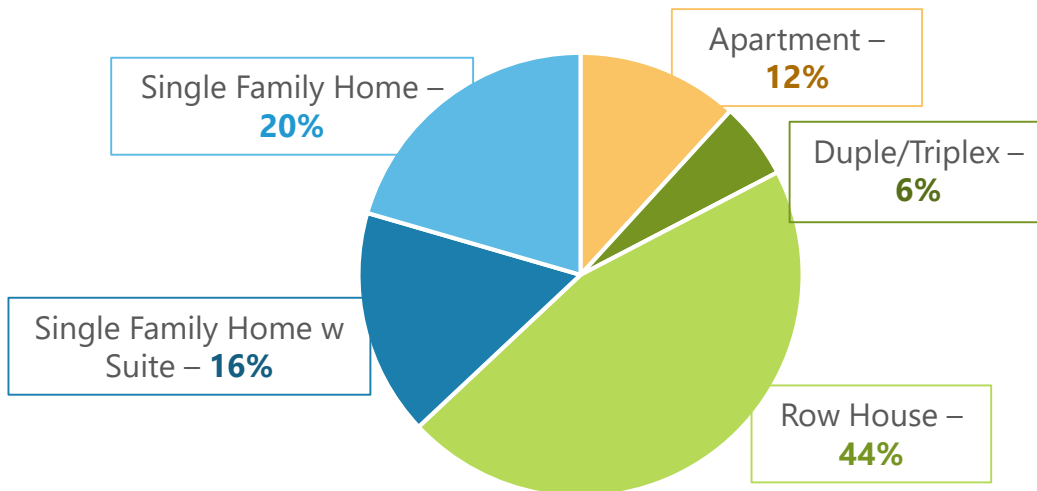
** Other uses include renovations / construction, & unoccupied units

DWELLING TYPE AND PROPERTY USE



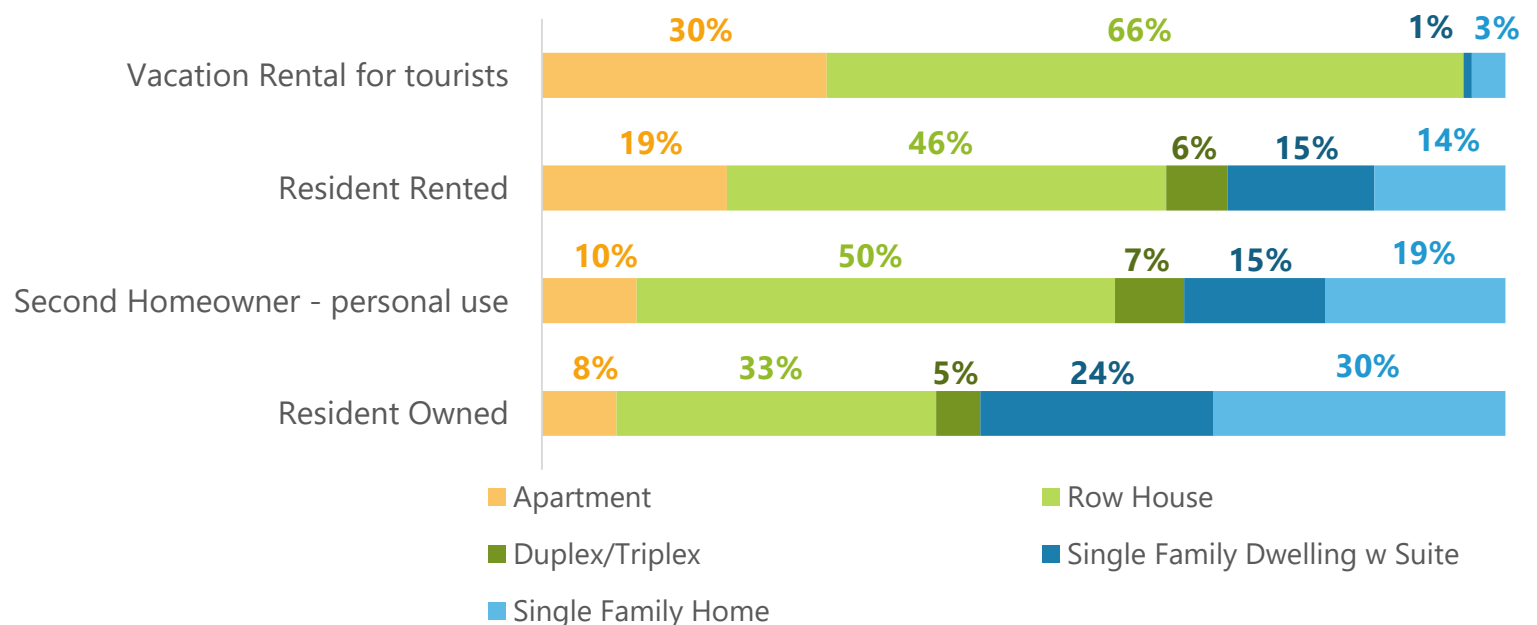
Town (row) houses make up the majority of surveyed properties, followed closely by single family homes.

Figure 5: Distribution of Dwelling Type, Percentage of surveyed properties by permitted use



While there are relatively few apartments in the sample, they are generally used as rental properties. Single Family homes tend to be resident owned and occupied.

Figure 6: Dwelling Type by Primary Property Use, Percentage of surveyed properties by primary use



PROPERTY USE & ASSESSED VALUES



Owners who regularly live in Whistler have the highest property values compared to those homes which are made available for rent. This is mainly due to the type of property rented more likely to be apartments and townhomes rather than single family homes.

Figure 7: Distribution of Dwelling Type by Permitted Use, Percentage of surveyed properties by permitted use

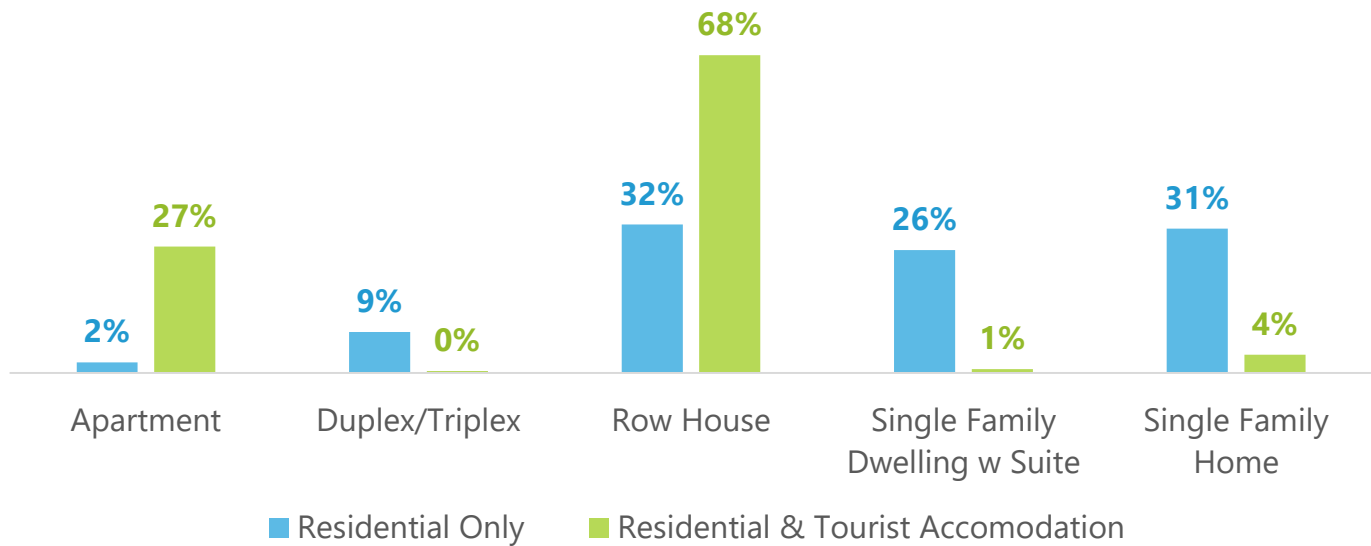
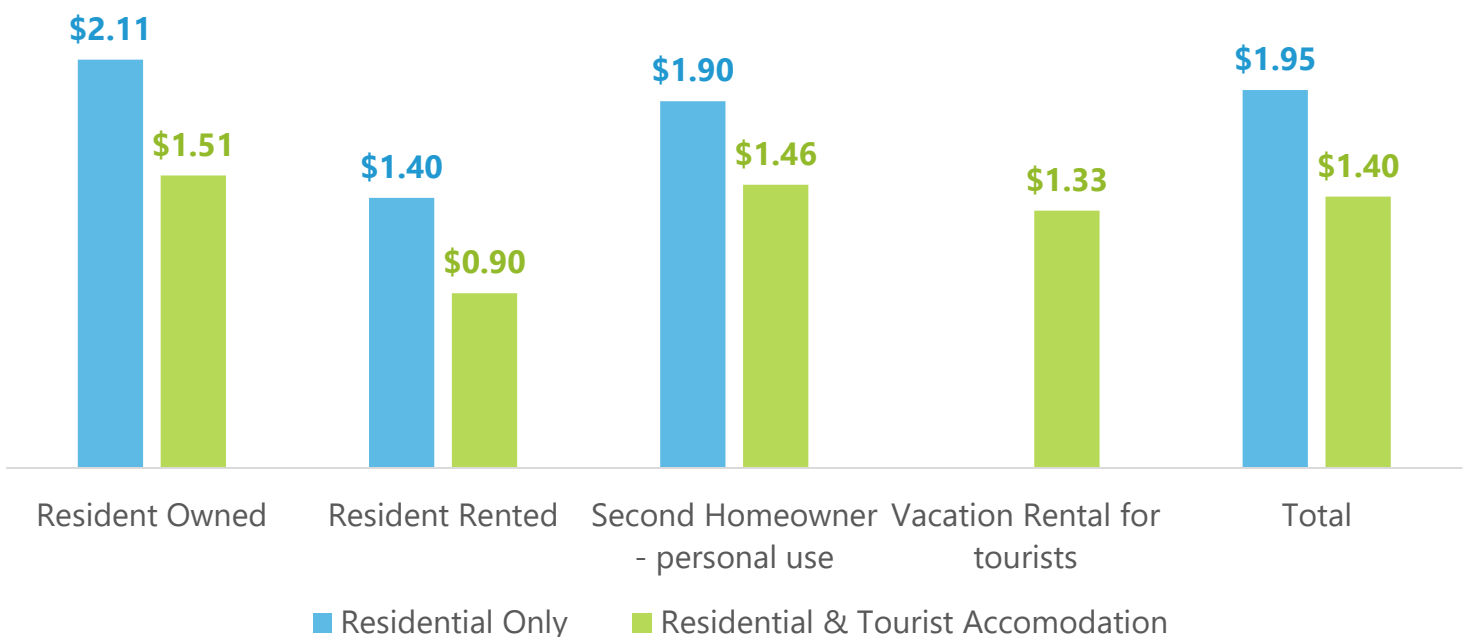


Figure 8: Average Assessed Property Valuations of surveyed properties, by primary use



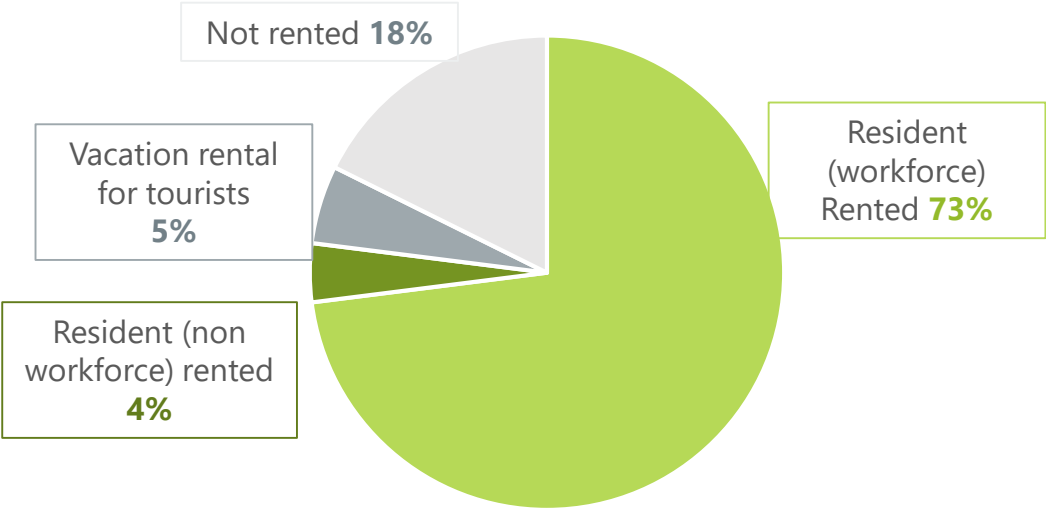
* Assessed values reflect BC Assessments 2021. Average valuations are not depicted for sample sizes of 15 or less

SECONDARY SUITES



24% of survey respondents reported having a secondary suite, and of those, 73% indicated the suite was being rented to local workforce.

Figure 9: Secondary Suite Primary Uses, Portion of all Secondary Suites



Rental suites play a significant role in providing housing for Whistler’s workforce – more than doubling the portion of rental homes available in the market

Figure 10: Primary Property Uses, Portion of All Properties and Secondary Suites

2x
Increase in rental units available to residents if we consider the impact of secondary suites

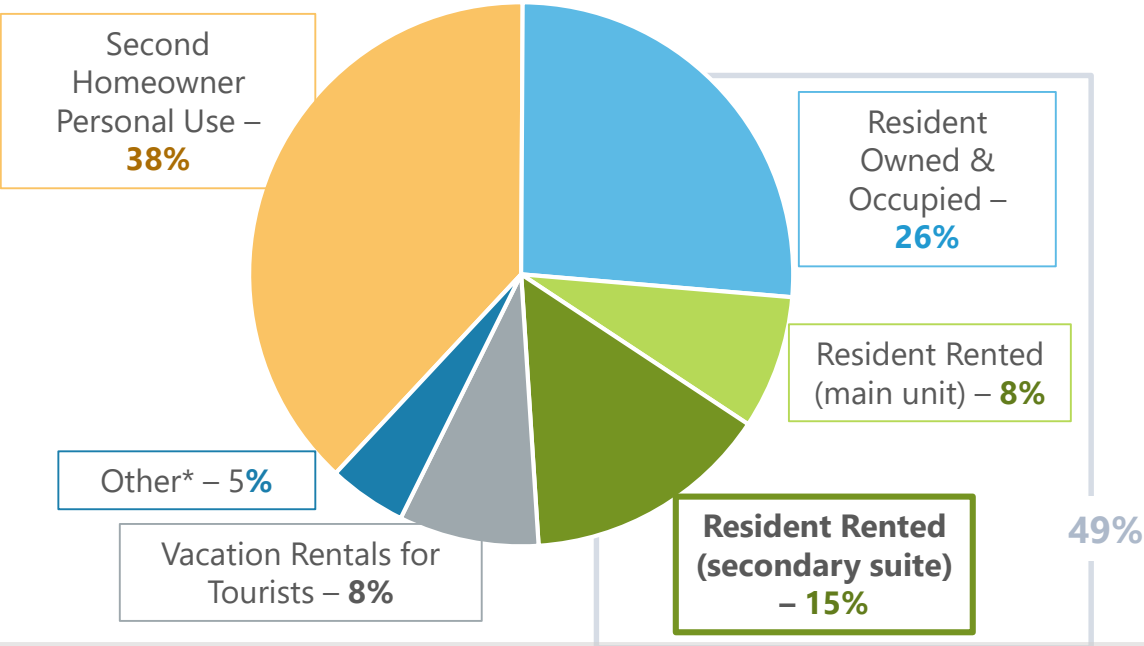


Figure 10 depicts property utilization when secondary suites are included. Compare with Figure 3 to see the changes.

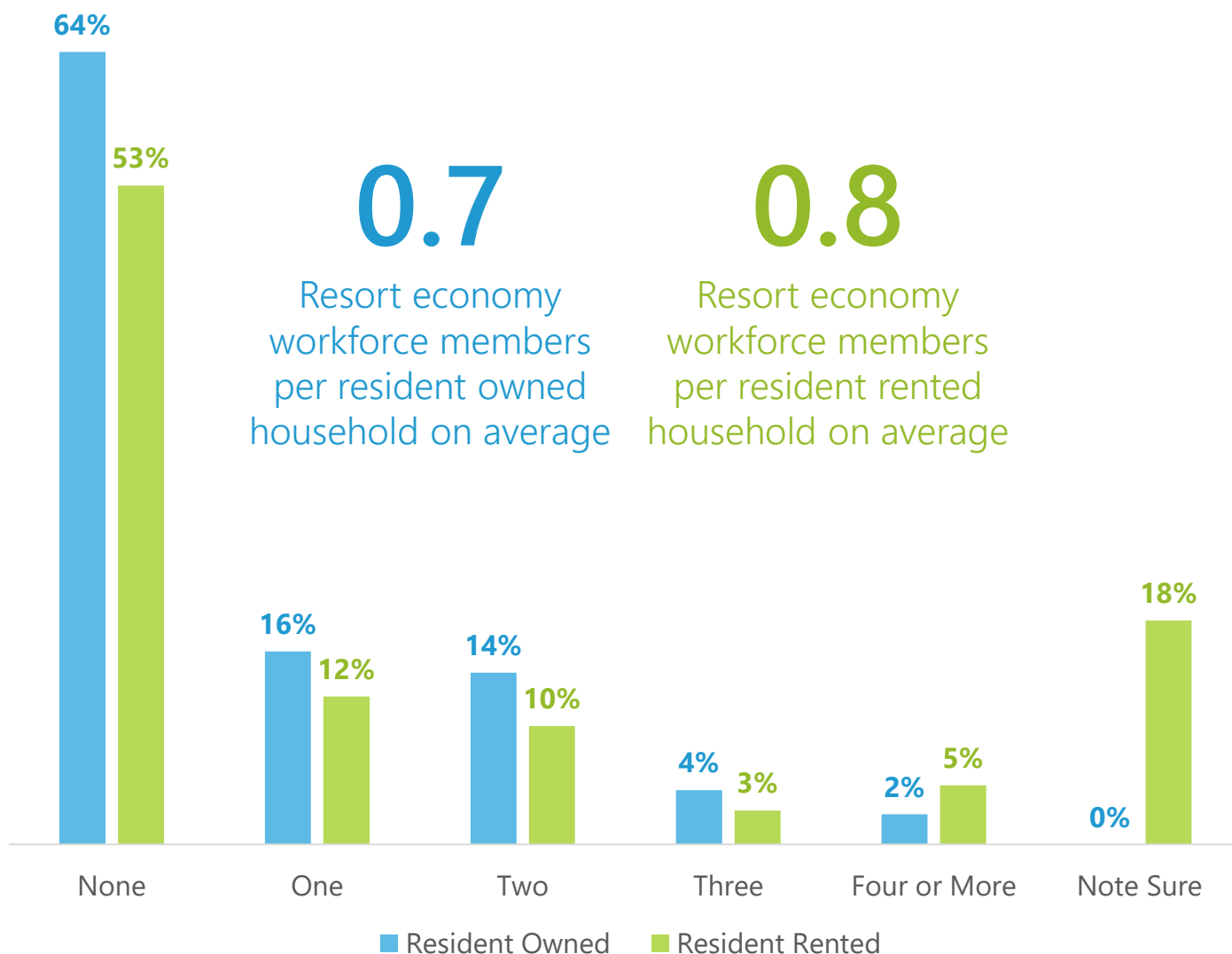
** Other uses include renovations / construction, & unoccupied / unrented units

HOUSING FOR THE RESORT WORKFORCE



Approx. 20% of all dwellings surveyed reported that one or more of the occupants are employed in the tourism-based economy – housing nearly 500 workforce members. Extrapolating from our sample, we could expect close to 3000 Whistler residents working in the resort economy to be living in market residential properties .

Figure 11: Resort Economy Workforce Members per Household, Portion of Resident Occupied Units by Tenure (Resident Owned vs. Resident Rented)

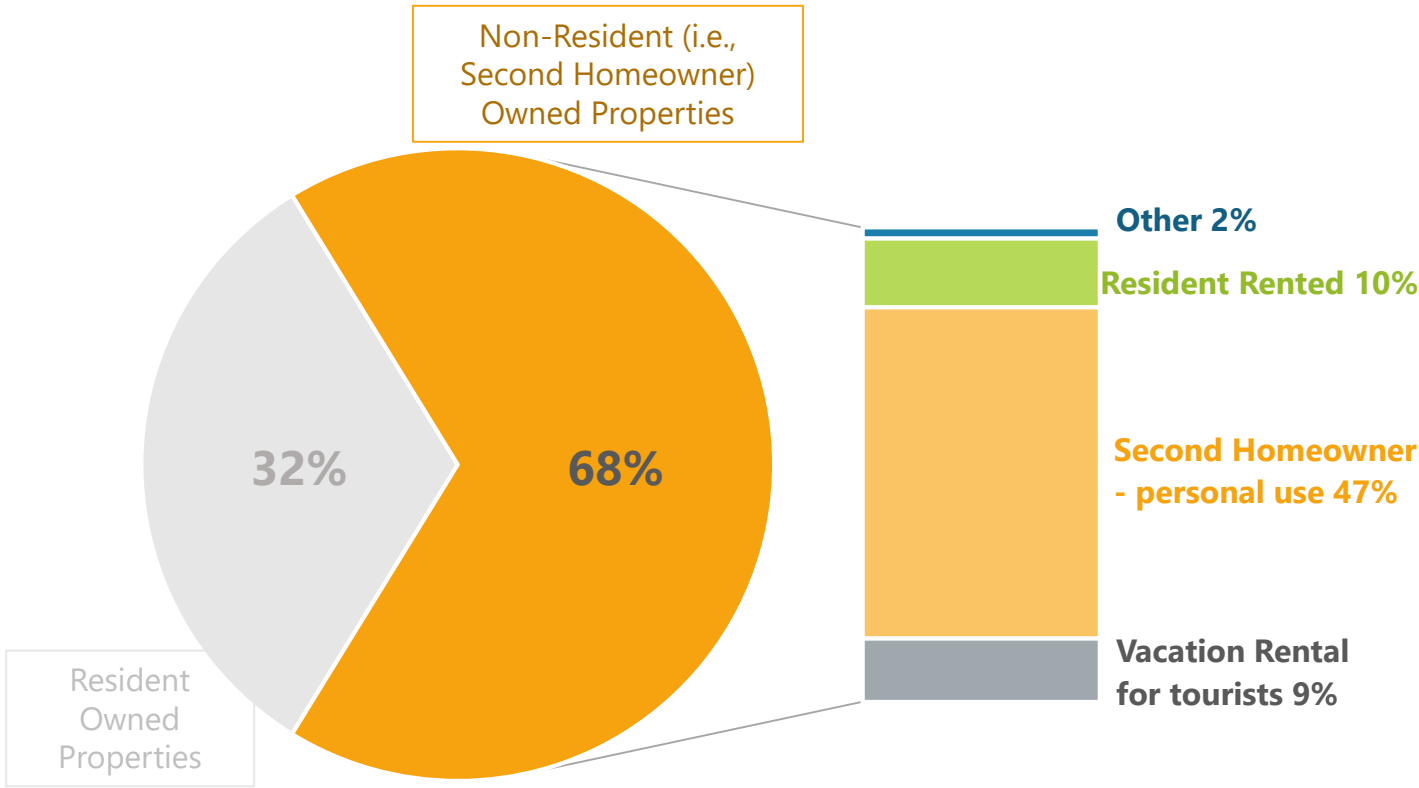


SECOND HOMEOWNERSHIP RATES AND USES



Almost 70% of survey respondents reported that their Whistler property is not their primary place of residence – i.e. they are a *'second homeowner'*. The majority of second homeowners report that they use their properties to spend time in Whistler, while a smaller portion rent their properties out on a short term basis to visitors, or a long term basis to residents.

Figure 12: Second Homeowner Rates & Uses for Previous Winter 20/21 Season*, Portion of all Properties Surveyed



* Owners were asked about the primary use of their properties for each of the Winter 20/21, Summer 21, Winter 21/22, and Summer 22 seasons – as there was almost no change in property use by season, the reported uses for Winter 20/21 are depicted.

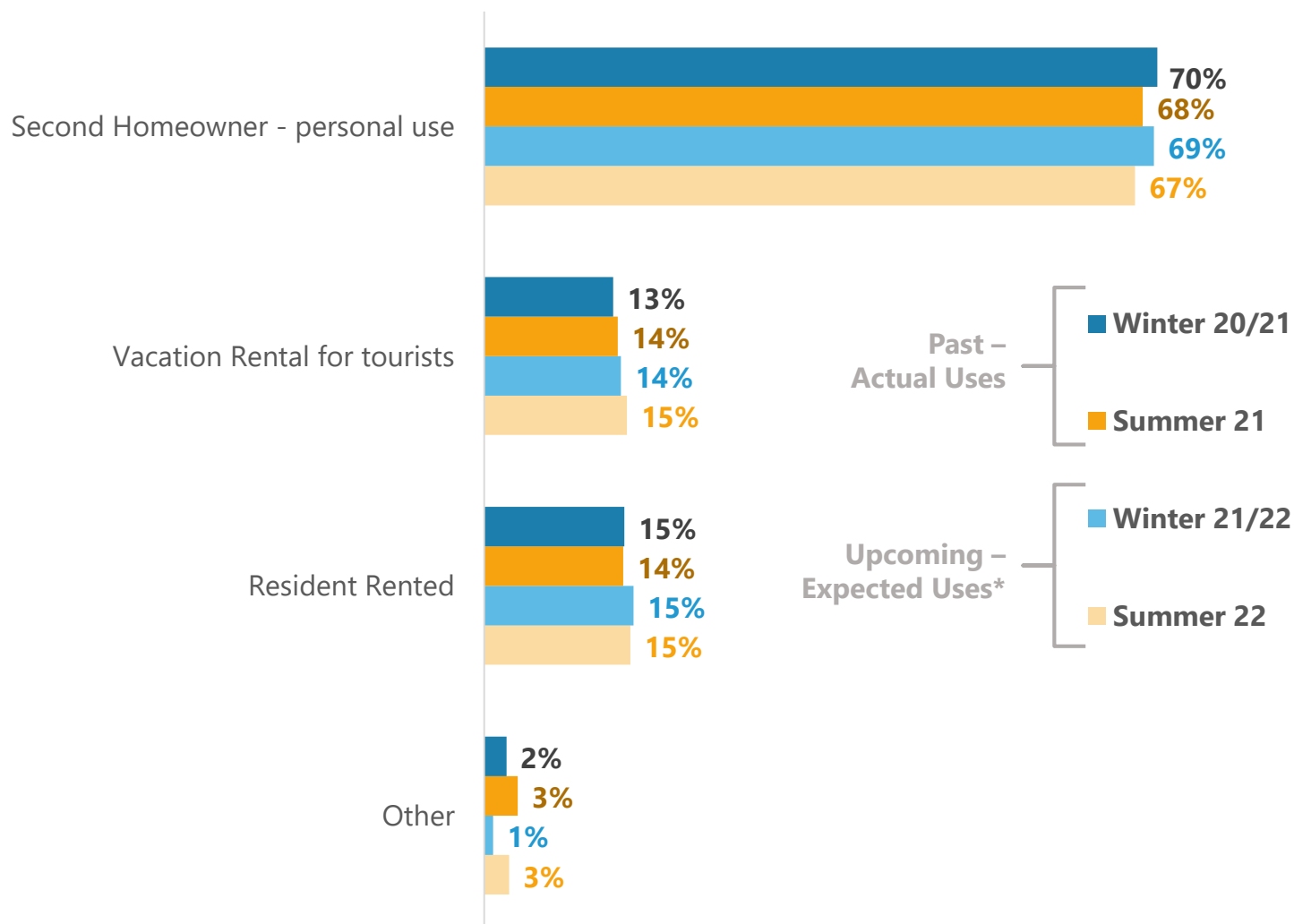
** Other uses include renovations / construction, mixed uses, & unoccupied units

FUTURE EXPECTED USES



Those surveyed reported little seasonal variation in how they used their properties in the past, and expect this to be fairly consistent moving forward into 2022. However, the survey indicates a minor decline in the portion of second homeowners using their properties personally, which may signal upcoming changes post-Covid. This minor decline is expected to be offset by a small increase in the availability of short and long term rentals.

Figure 13: Seasonal and Expected use of properties, Portion of all SHO Owned Properties *



**Note at the time the survey was released, the Winter 21/22 season had just started. Therefore, results for this time period are 'expected' as opposed to 'actual' uses*

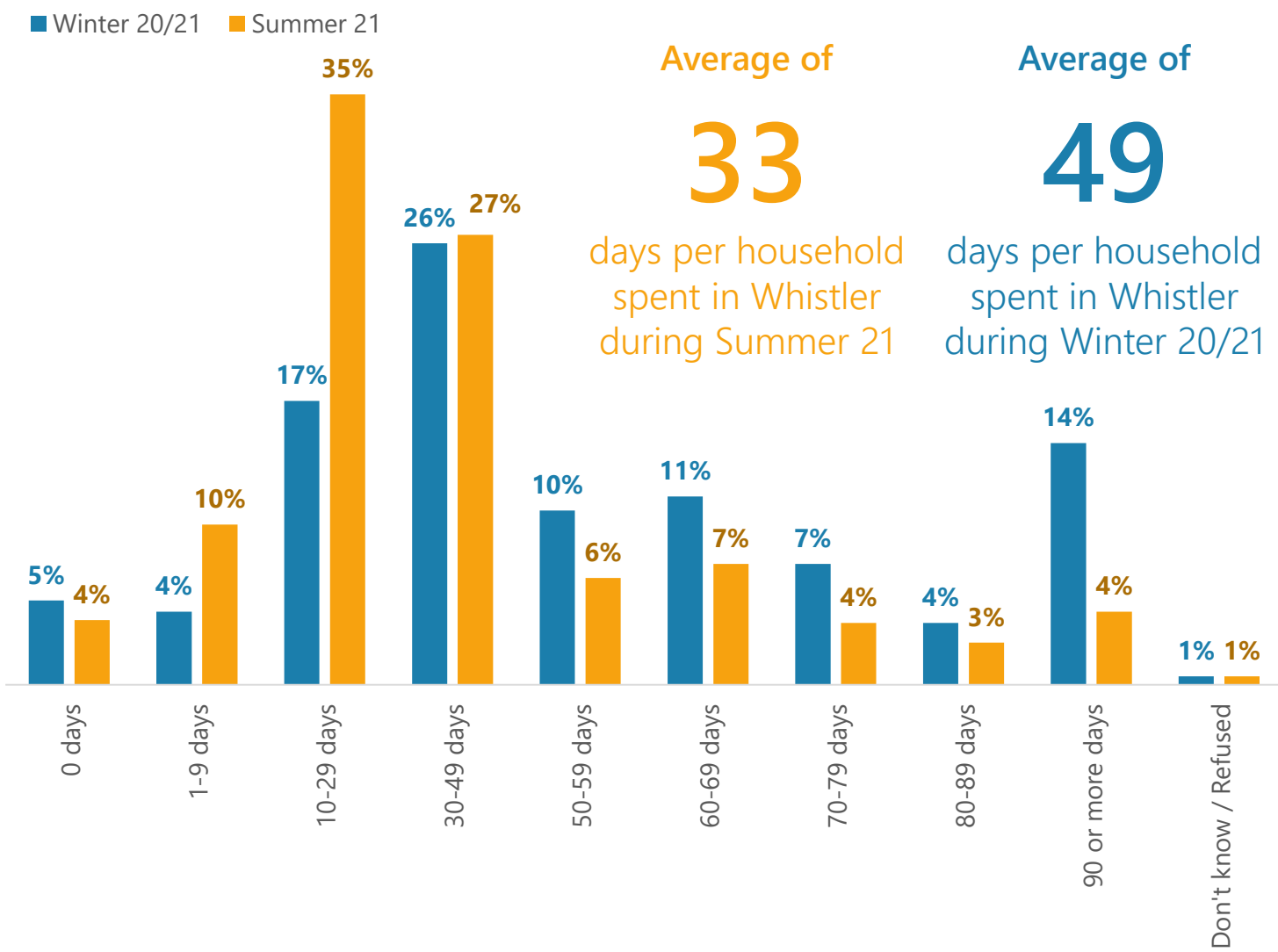
SECOND HOMEOWNERS – CURRENT VISITATION



Many second homeowners are regular visitors to Whistler, and tend to spend more days in Whistler during the Winter season.

Figure 14: Seasonal Frequency of SHO Visitation, portion of those who primarily use their Whistler property as a personal vacation property, by season

Question: How Many Days Did you Spend at Your Property each Season?



Based on the survey results, we expect second homeowners accounted for an additional ~1,000 people per day in Whistler on average throughout the winter 20/21 season, and an additional ~650 people per day in the summer season 21 season.

SECOND HOMEOWNERS – FUTURE VISITATION



52% of second homeowners reported that they expect to visit more frequently in the next 5 years – many of whom already visit on a weekly basis.

Figure 15: Expected Future Frequency of Use of Vacation Properties, Portion of those who Primarily use their Whistler Property as a Personal Vacation Property

Question: How do you anticipate your property to be used in the next 5 years?

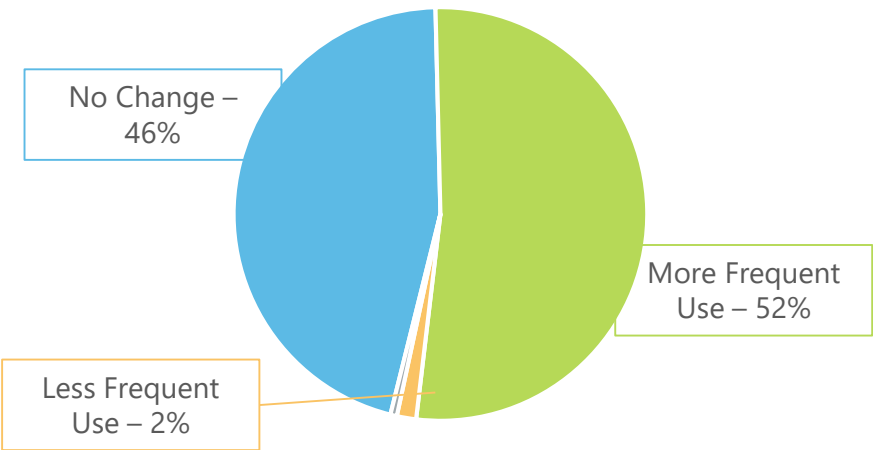
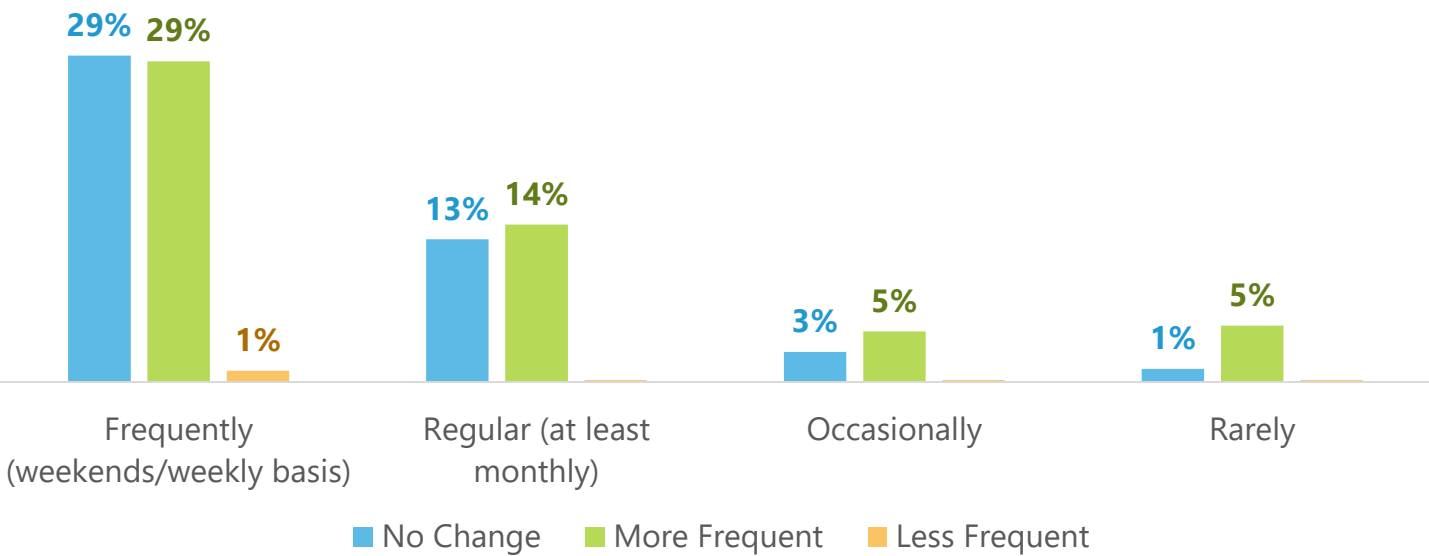


Figure 16: Expected Future use of Vacation Property x Current Frequency of Visitation, Portion of those who Primarily use their Whistler Property as a Personal Vacation Property

Question: How do you anticipate your property to be used in the next 5 years x How often did you visit your Whistler property in Winter 20/21?



WHAT NEXT?

The results of this survey will inform a variety of ongoing work at the RMOW. It is also made available for use by community groups.

1. Recommended actions that resulted from the 2016 **Mayor's Task Force on Residential Housing continue to be progressed**, to address challenges with housing availability and affordability for the resort's workforce
2. **Ongoing planning work**, to ensure infrastructure and facilities can support Whistler's fluctuating daily population levels
3. **Strategic Planning work such as The Balance Model** initiative, which seeks to model scenarios of potential future populations and the implications of servicing those segments of population considering environmental, social and economic indicators. This will enable strategies and actions to be considered that may be implemented to support achievement of the community's goals in Whistler's Official Community Plan and progress towards the vision of '*A place where our community thrives, nature is protected and guests are inspired*'.

How can I find out more or share my experiences?

The community is invited to keep up to date with the Balance Model Initiative that looks to strategically plan for the long term future of the resort community ensuring that tourism economy and community needs are considered holistically.

www.whistler.ca/balancemodel

The Community Life Survey also runs annually and gives residents and visitors an opportunity to share their perspectives, experiences, and priorities with Council and RMOW staff – sign up for the 2022 Community Life Survey at whistler.ca/stay-connected/surveys

Thank you for reading

For more information

please contact economicdevelopment@whistler.ca

