



THE WHISTLER TASK FORCE ON LEARNING & EDUCATION

JUNE 2013 REPORT



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Executive Summary

Whistler's Council-appointed *Learning and Education Task Force* began work in October 2012, and has met regularly to June 2013. Council set the mandate for the Task Force as follows:

To develop recommendations for a strategic framework for RMOW to advance and evaluate education opportunities for the benefit of the resort community.

The Task Force is pleased to present this report, with its recommendations, to Council.

The report provides background information on policy context and post-secondary education, a list of key considerations, information on the April open house sponsored by the Task Force, recommended principles, goals and objectives, a summary of potential initiatives, and a Strategic Framework.

The Task Force stresses that the field of post-secondary education is very dynamic and competitive, and is especially impacted by the role of the internet. However, it concludes that location will retain a role in education (especially educational tourism), and that post-secondary education (including training) offers an opportunity to broaden Whistler's role as a world-class resort, and meet the vision identified in the *Whistler 2020 Plan*. In doing so, Whistler can enrich the lives of both residents and visitors, broaden the economy, and contribute to a fuller use of resort accommodation.

Whistler has many features the Task Force believes offer a strong basis for post-secondary education opportunities. These include its unique environment and existing sports, recreation, arts, and cultural activities, and buoyant business and voluntary sectors. Education already has a presence in the community through individual entrepreneurs and organizations.

The Strategic Framework proposed by the Task Force identifies a range of potential opportunities for Whistler to pursue, but within the context of Principles, Goals and Objectives, and an approach that stresses pragmatism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 | Utilize the Principles, Goals, Objectives, and Information Developed by the Task Force

These will provide guidance to the RMOW in:

- Considering initiatives it may launch; and
- Evaluating requests from providers for assistance or approvals.

The chart in Section 11 illustrates how the principles, goals, objectives, and information can be used. These will also assist providers in developing their proposals.

2 | Adopt a Pragmatic and Community-Based Approach

The Task Force recommends the RMOW adopt a strategic approach that is simple, effective, and easily implemented, using RMOW staff, community partners, and volunteers from the community for the next three to five years. As indicated in Section 9, the Task Force recommends against setting up a separate coordinating organization at this time.

3 | Recognize a Variety of Roles for the RMOW

There are, and will be, a variety of individuals, organizations, and companies of all types and sizes that will be active in the field of post-secondary education in Whistler. The RMOW does not have to perform a role in all of these endeavors, and has a choice in the roles it may wish to perform in the area of post-secondary education. In undertaking any of these roles, it is recommended that the Principles, Goals, and Objectives be used by the RMOW in its consideration of action.

The Task Force identifies four main types of roles for different types of initiatives:

- Regulatory;
- Passive;
- Facilitation; and
- Pro-Active.

4 | Set a Timeframe

The RMOW should consider identifying priorities for the next three to five years. At the end of this time an evaluation of the Strategy should be undertaken.

5 | Determine Infrastructure Availability

The RMOW, with Tourism Whistler and other parties, should prepare an inventory of the types, sizes, and availability of building space available for educational initiatives in the resort. The RMOW may wish to work with the Whistler Education Group (WEG) in this regard. Although a surplus of visitor accommodation has been identified, information on meeting spaces that could be used to accommodate educational initiatives would be valuable.

6 | Prioritize Opportunities for Pro-Action

The Task Force recommends that the RMOW use the spectrum of opportunities identified as a framework for considering education initiatives. The RMOW should identify in the order of five initiatives with which it will take a pro-active role over the next three to five years. These will need to be consistent with available RMOW and community resources. Key features should include:

- Creating early success and momentum for Whistler's vision for post-secondary education;
- Including providers with a strong reputation and track record that will help build a profile for Whistler in the education field;
- Initiatives that are relatively easy to establish; and
- Initiatives that build upon synergies, and leverage current efforts and opportunities in terms of benefits for Whistler.

7 | Ensure Strong Partners

Partnering will be the basis of a pro-active role by Whistler. Partners will include:

- Education providers;
- Funding partners; and
- Partners in promotion – examples would be Tourism Whistler and the Whistler Arts Council.

8 | Establish Adequate Funding

The expenditure involved in education initiatives will be largely borne by providers, and the costs by learners. Some courses may need support from other sources, such as a foundation, but that is not a role recommended for the RMOW. However, for the Strategy to be successful, some funding by the RMOW will likely be necessary. Expenditures should be based on an analysis of the risks and “leverage potential”, and benefits for the community.

Some examples of funding could include:

- Possible “seed money” (cost sharing) for business plan development for the initiatives that have been selected through an RFP by the RMOW;
- A contribution to start-up costs; and
- A contribution to marketing information.

9 | Invest In and Facilitate Marketing Information

The RMOW, in partnership with Tourism Whistler, should develop some marketing information that highlights Whistler’s advantages and opportunities for lifelong learning and post-secondary education. Target markets would be both potential learners and providers. This initiative should be consistent in messaging, start small, and grow as the education initiatives grow.

10 | Seek Advice from Community Resources

The RMOW should continue close contact with the community, and draw upon it as post-secondary initiatives are developed. The significant community resources in Whistler can be drawn upon for advice through a variety of stages as initiatives evolve, including input on EOIs and RFPs, and review of submissions and feasibility analyses.

11 | Ensure Due Diligence

In considering proposals for post-secondary education, the RMOW will need to undertake due diligence appropriate to the scale of the initiative. This should include a review of:

- A provider’s past experience;
- Business plan;
- Risk analysis for the municipality;
- Benefits to the resort community;
- Complementary initiatives, and;
- Consistency with the Principles, Goals and Objectives.



THE RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

Introduction

1

1.1 Mandate and Membership

Whistler's Council-appointed *Learning and Education Task Force* began work in October 2012, and has met regularly to June 2013, and is pleased to present this report to Council.

Council set the mandate for the Task Force as follows:

To develop recommendations for a strategic framework for RMOW to advance and evaluate education opportunities for the benefit of the resort community.

The Task Force has interpreted the deliverables to fulfill this mandate to include:

- Providing contextual information on post-secondary education;
- Developing criteria for evaluating post-secondary educational opportunities in Whistler;
- Identifying the range of potential opportunities for post-secondary education in Whistler;
- Identifying RMOW interests;
- Engaging the community and obtaining public input; and
- Preparing a final report on findings and recommendations.

The Task Force did not consider secondary education within the scope of its mandate.

1.1.1 TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

The Task Force comprised eleven members with two resource persons (Biographies are provided in the Appendix):

- Nancy Wilhelm-Morden, Mayor, RMOW Chair
- Andrée Janyk, Councilor, RMOW

Community Volunteers

- Allen Puckett
- Bevin Heath Ansley
- David Dale-Johnson
- George Suart
- Shannon Byrne Susko
- Terry Deutscher



Staff

- Mike Furey, CAO, RMOW
- Jan Jansen, GM of Resort Experience
- Mike Kirkegaard, Director of Planning, RMOW

Resources

- Gwyn Symmons, Project Manager, CitySpaces Consulting
- Kay Chow, Recording Secretary

RMOW Policy Context

2

In undertaking its work, the Task Force was mindful that the RMOW has well-developed policy frameworks, which have been informed through community engagement, and which guide its future. This policy framework can be found in three key documents:

- *Whistler 2020* (Whistler's comprehensive sustainability plan and vision);
- *The Official Community Plan*; and
- *The Corporate Plan*.

The Task Force recommends that any potential opportunities for post-secondary education must demonstrate their alignment with these documents. This is an important guiding principle (See Section 7).

Whistler Council has identified further exploration of post-secondary education as a potential opportunity to complement and diversify Whistler's tourism economy.

High-level municipal policies in support of exploring this opportunity are found within these municipal documents. They provide a context and parameters for Council's consideration.

Council has also created an *Economic Partnership Initiative (EPI)* to advance economic initiatives in order to build confidence, encourage investment, and support growth of Whistler's resort economy.

The EPI will also provide overarching direction to further guide decisions on resort community economic opportunities.

Important statements from Whistler's policy framework are included in the table on the following page.



Whistler 2020: Select Strategies and Descriptions of Success

Learning Strategy: Descriptions of Success	<p>In 2020, Whistler has developed and facilitated learning opportunities that enable personal and professional development, and that help to achieve Whistler's vision. By this time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse, affordable, and accessible lifelong learning opportunities exist to meet the community's needs; and • A learning culture is nurtured and promoted, locally and regionally, through diverse formal and informal opportunities, and leverages Whistler's international stature.
Arts, Culture and Heritage	<p>In 2020, Whistler is renowned for world-class arts, cultural, and heritage opportunities that have become a part of its spirit and community life. These opportunities are creative, authentic, diverse, sustainable, accessible and affordable to both residents and visitors. By this time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These opportunities will attract visitors, and contribute to the experience and local economy. • Learning opportunities contribute to the local economy, and attract visitors to the resort community for learning vacations.
Economic Strategy: Descriptions of Success	<p>In 2020, Whistler has a healthy and unique tourism economy that provides a good quality of life, which attracts and retains community members. By this time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistler has a diversified and year-round tourism economy; • Whistler pro-actively seizes economic opportunities that are compatible with tourism, and effectively adapts to changing external conditions; • Whistler holds competitive advantages in the destination resort marketplace as a result of its vibrant, unique character, products and services; and • Whistler's core accommodation base and long-term investments made in the community are protected.
Finance: Descriptions of Success	<p>In 2020, Whistler lives within its financial means, and has the appropriate financial tools to meet the current and future needs of the resort community. By this time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The long-term consequences of decisions are carefully considered.

2.1 Official Community Plan

Relevant Policies and Objectives	
GOAL 3.1	Guide Whistler's next phase of evolution as a maturing resort community focused on enhancement and optimization of existing and approved land use and development.
Objective 3.1.1	Establish and adhere to community-determined growth management limits.
Objective 3.1.2	Optimize the use and function of existing and approved development.
Policy 3.1.2.1	Support flexibility, diversity, adaptability, and efficiency in land use and development so the resort community can derive the greatest benefit from existing development.
Policy 3.1.2.2	Seek creative solutions for optimizing land use and respective interests such as land exchanges, dedications, amenity zoning, and transfers of development rights.
Policy 3.1.2.3	Ensure new land uses and development are complementary to existing development and add to Whistler's success; avoid expansion and duplication that contributes to oversupply, diminishes the success of existing uses and development, and creates additional burdens on the resort community.
GOAL 3.2	Manage land use and development to enhance the mountain resort community's character and quality of life, protect the natural environment, strengthen the local economy, protect human safety and property, and support efficient use of infrastructure and facilities.
Objective 3.2.1	Reinforce Whistler's mountain resort character, compact development pattern, social fabric, economic vitality, and diversity.
Policy 3.2.1.3	Minimize land disturbance and conversion of remaining natural areas to development.
Policy 3.2.1.4	Support land uses and development that contribute to a diversified tourism economy compatible with Whistler's resort community character and values.

Relevant Policies and Objectives	
GOAL 3.3	Guide the type, location, amount and timing of land use and development to move towards the resort community's Whistler2020 vision, priorities and descriptions of success.
Objective 3.3.1	Plan land use and development to complement and better capitalize upon Whistler's existing development and remaining natural areas.
Policy 3.3.3.4	<p>Any land use or development proposal that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not conform to WUDCA; or • Proposes to raise the bed unit limit; or • Does not conform to the Whistler Land Use Map <p>should not be favorably considered unless it is a strategic opportunity that demonstrates extraordinary benefits to the resort community and will substantially strengthen Whistler's progress towards achieving its vision. Any such proposals shall be subject to significant community engagement to obtain the views of community members and stakeholders, and this shall be in addition to the statutory public hearing process.</p>
GOAL 4.9	Position and optimize Whistler's commercial, business, service commercial and light industrial centres and nodes.
Objective 4.9.1	Reinforce Whistler Village as Whistler's Town Centre, functioning as the commercial and social hub of the resort community and focused on delivering a dynamic and authentic resort experience for residents and visitors.
GOAL 5.5	Support sustainable diversification and growth compatible with the tourism economy.
Objective 5.5.1	Support the accommodation and commercial sectors through economic diversification compatible with Whistler's four-season tourism economy.
Policy 5.5.1.1	Support increased cultural, arts, entertainment, events, sport tourism, and health and wellness opportunities that diversify our tourism-based economy.
Policy 5.5.1.2	Support diversification opportunities through an enhanced learning sector.
Policy 5.5.1.3	Recognize the importance of Whistler's tourism economy by supporting compatible education opportunities
Policy 5.5.1.4	Work with resort stakeholders to pursue diversification opportunities that are appropriate and complementary to our infrastructure.

Relevant Policies and Objectives	
GOAL 5.7	Sustain efficient and appropriate and revitalized Whistler land uses.
Objective 5.7.1	Ensure that the resort community's investments in the built environment provide optimum levels of service and are continually renewed.
Policy 5.7.1.1	Support re-purposing, reusing and/or optimizing built space instead of constructing new buildings.
GOAL 7.8	Support and enhance the growth and vitality of Whistler's arts, culture, and heritage sectors.
Objective 7.8.2	Increase opportunities for education, participation, and enjoyment of arts, culture, and heritage for residents and visitors.



THE RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

Whistler Community & Economic Context

3

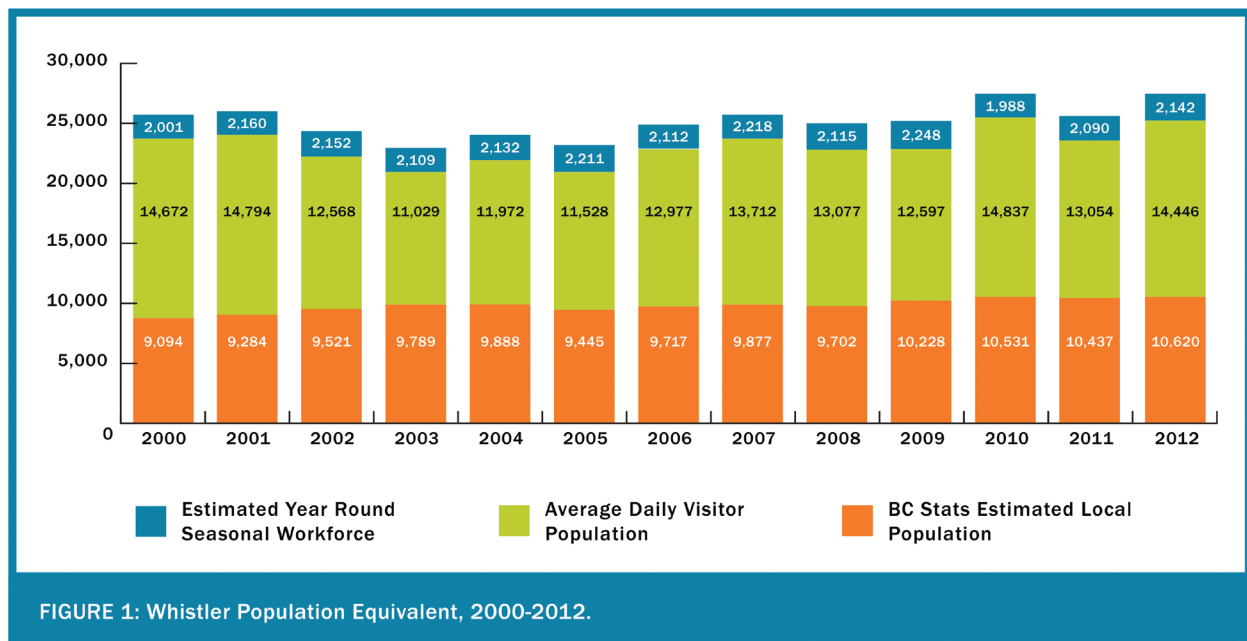
Whistler Council has set up an *Economic Partnership Initiative (EPI)* as part of its *2012/2014 Action Plan*. The work of the EPI is of direct relevance to learning and education in Whistler. Current economic challenges, changing “realities”, and emergent economic trends each demand that collective economic planning is pursued across the community to ensure it is in the best position for sustained economic viability. Managing risks, strategically leveraging collective assets, and maximizing alignment will all be improved by the collective planning endeavor of the EPI – a shared game plan will strengthen all.

The work of the EPI and *Task Force on Learning and Education* are designed to collectively inform Council in its community economic planning.

Included in this report, as context, is selected information excerpted primarily from the work of the *Economic Partnership Initiative (EPI)*, as well as the ongoing monitoring and reporting of the *Whistler 2020* project.

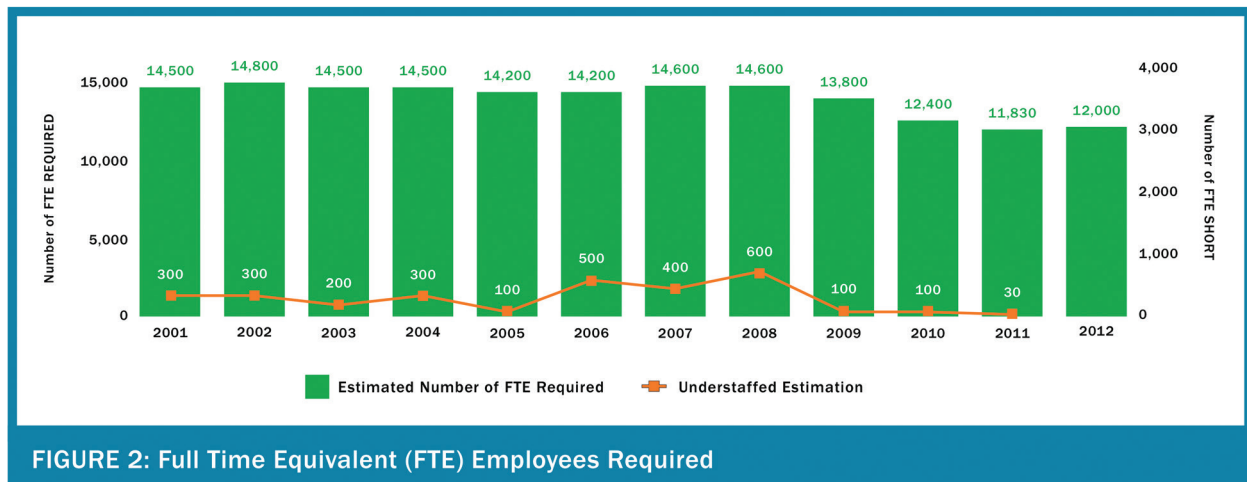
3.1 Population

Whistler’s population growth slowed after 1998. For the past ten years it has been around 10,000 people, with some minor fluctuations. The majority of the workforce resides in Whistler, and together with the average daily resident population, produces an annual population equivalent of around 26,000. This is illustrated in Figure 1.



3.2 Employment

Whistler is fortunate to have full employment – the average unemployment rate in 2011 was around 1%. Figure 2 shows the number of estimated Full Time Equivalent employees required over the period 2001- 2011.



3.3 Visitors

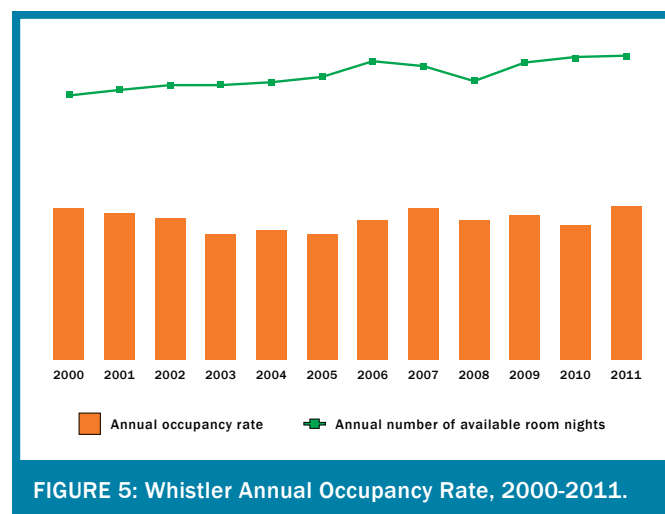
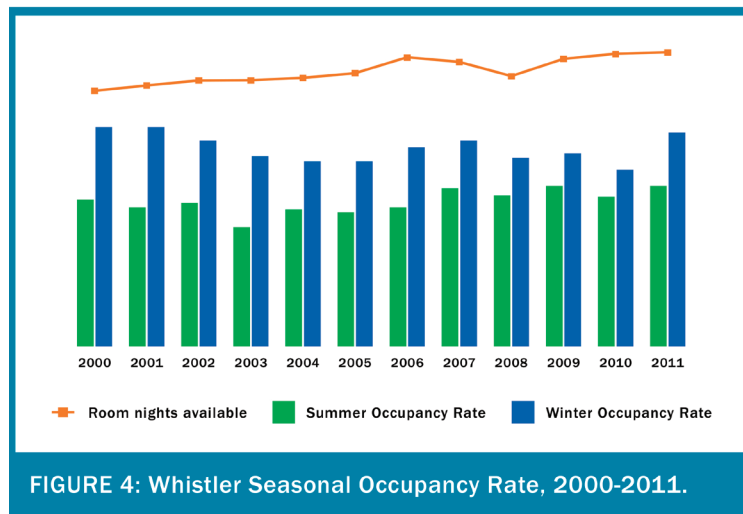
Whistler sustained continuous growth in visitors until 2001, but international and world economic events produced fluctuations over the last ten-year period.

In winter 2011/12, there were one million visitors and in the summer of 2012, 1.5 million visitors. However, summer visitors stay for shorter periods, with correspondingly lower expenditures. There were 623,000 room nights booked in the winter (with visitors spending \$793 million), and 479,000 in the summer (spending \$308 million). See Figure 3.



Over the last 14 years, there has been an increasing discrepancy between the number of room nights available and both the summer and winter occupancy rates in the resort's accommodations. In 2011, the occupancy rates were only a little over 50%. See Figures 4 and 5.

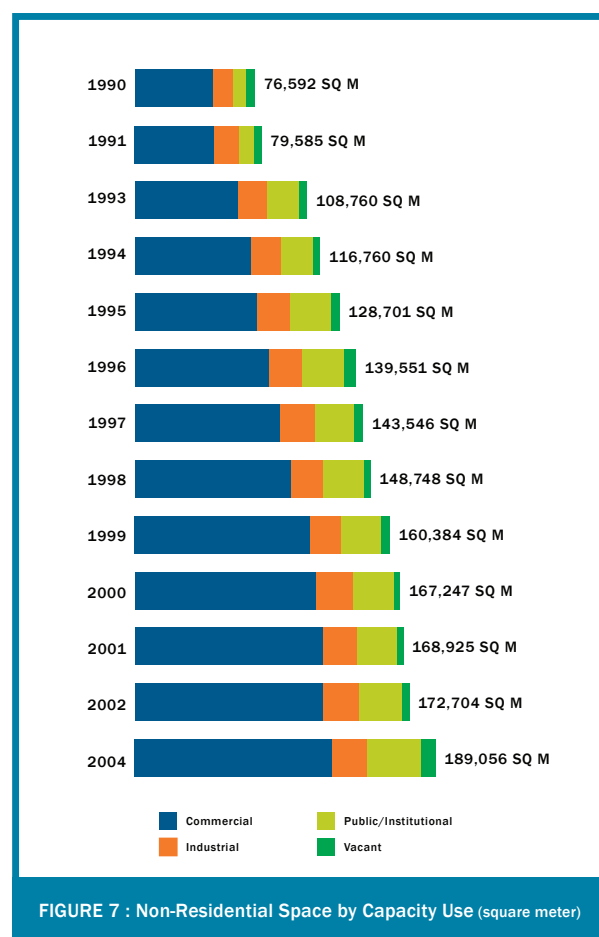
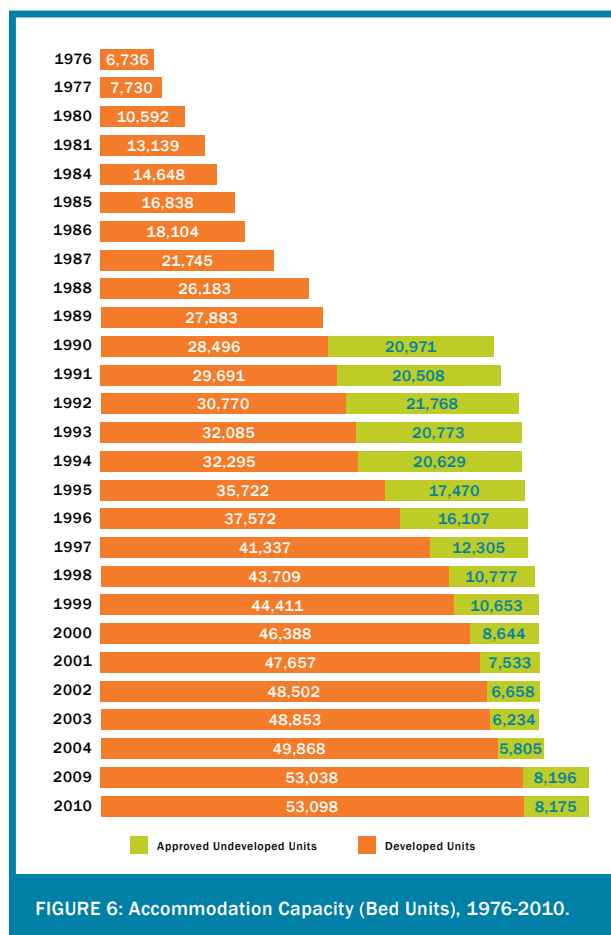
In winter, destination travellers make up 59% of visitors to Whistler, and regional visitors make up 41%. This is reversed in the summer, with 45% being destination visitors and 55% being regional visitors.



* Actual room night data is proprietary, and has been omitted.

3.4 Accommodation & Non-Residential Development Capacity

Accommodation capacity has steadily increased, and Figure 4 shows the bed unit capacity from 1976 to 2010. There has been a corresponding decline in the approved, but undeveloped units available – Figure 6 illustrates this. In 2010, accommodation capacity was over 53,000. Non-residential space has also grown over this period to 180,000 m². Vacancies are small. See Figure 7.



3.5 Real Estate

After a period of growth, Whistler's assessed values have trended downwards (see Figure 8). There has been considerable variation in real estate sales values, with a significant reduction following the issues of the international economy in 2008 (Figure 9).

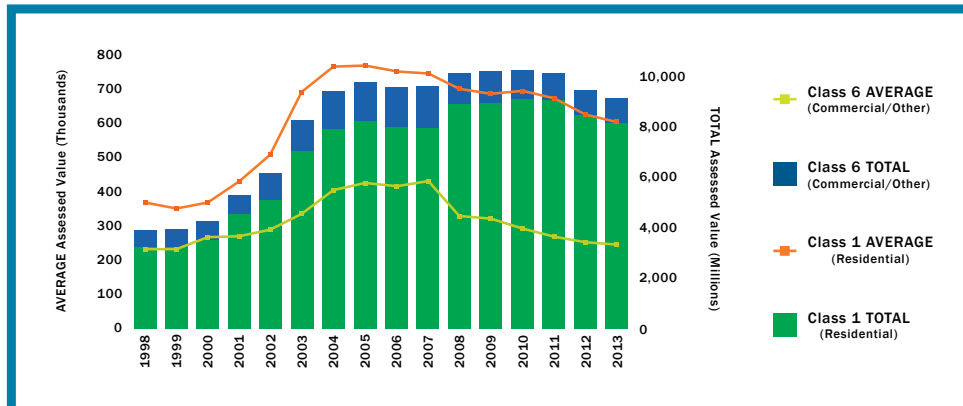


FIGURE 8: Historic Assessed Values in Whistler, 1998-2013.

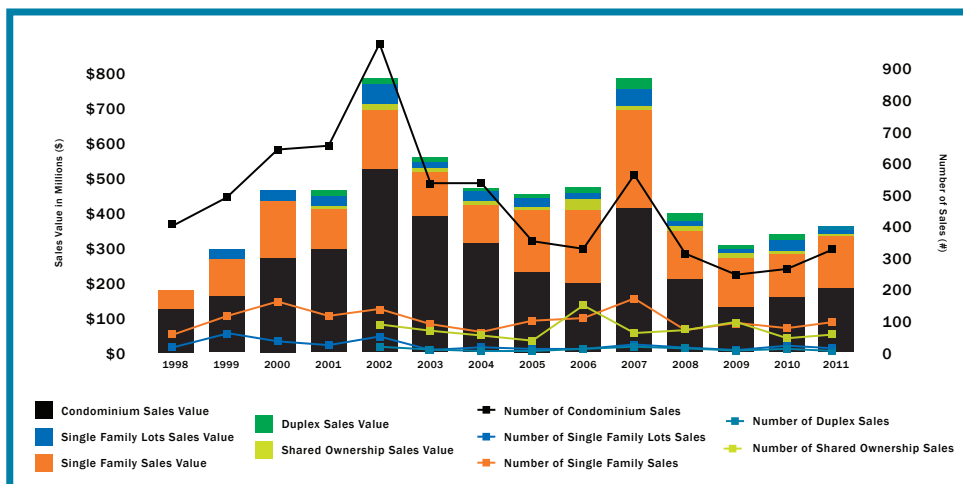


FIGURE 9: Real Estate Sales Value by Type and Number of Sales

3.6 Conclusions

These statistics show that Whistler has quite a small base population to support educational initiatives, but a very large visitor population. Initiatives will need to recognize this. Of particular note is the significantly underused capacity in accommodation. Education initiatives that draw learners to the community can clearly assist in making better uses of this accommodation.



Post-Secondary Education – A Changing Environment

4

The world of post-secondary education is a highly competitive and rapidly changing field. The Task Force, through its consultations and research, highlights six key changes that need to be recognized when considering learning and education initiatives for Whistler. It should be recognized the research is commensurate with the resources and time available to the Task Force.

4.1 Lifelong Learning

- Education is now life long.
- Changes to the economy and technology require that skills and knowledge be upgraded throughout life.
- Lifelong learning is available for people seeking to develop their knowledge/skills for personal fulfillment and interest.
- There appears to be a large scope for increasing the uptake of post-secondary education opportunities. Statistics Canada reported that over the period of 2002 to 2008, the proportion of Canadians who participated in job-related education or training shifted from 30 to 36%. Statistics Canada also reported that almost half of Canadians between the ages of 18 and 64 participated in some form of education or training.

4.2 The Impact of the Internet

The internet is dramatically changing teaching and learning.

- Providers of education are increasingly using the internet as a teaching delivery method (e-learning). This includes e-learning as part of conventional course delivery, and as a sole delivery method.
- It is possible to take a course, or obtain a qualification, from a provider on the other side of the world – this is creating a new competitive environment for education institutions.
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) involve open access and large-scale participation, sometimes in the tens of thousands. MOOCs have developed dramatically in the last couple of years, and have emerged in a number of companies and institutions. UBC is planning four free, non-credit, online courses in 2013, and already has 130,000 students from 183 countries enrolled for a course on Game Theory, launched early this year in cooperation with Stanford University.
- A Statistics Canada study in 2008 reported that overall, almost one-quarter of education program participants took their program through distance education, and that twice as many adult Canadians (aged 25 to 64) used distance education compared to youth (aged 18 to 24).

4.3 Expanding Education Opportunities

In recent years, there has been an explosion of education providers internationally and in BC – including private and non-profit institutions, private companies, and individuals. Concurrently, there has been a wide array of courses/programs of all levels and time frames available from these providers, and via the internet.

There have been significant changes to post-secondary institutions in BC:

- 25 public post-secondary institutions now exist in BC. In 2008, five new universities were created from existing colleges, bringing the total to twelve;
- There are now 17 private post-secondary institutions authorized under the *Degree Authorization Act*. The Province has established the *Degree Quality Assessment Board*, which conducts quality assessment activities to ensure new proposed degree programs, at both private and public post-secondary institutions, meet consistent and high quality criteria;
- 45 institutions without official granting authorization offer post-secondary courses; and
- A small number of private universities have closed in the province.

4.4 Funding for Post-secondary is Challenging

- Capital and operating funding is currently difficult to obtain for public post-secondary education across North America.
- BC has a multi-stage process for considering applications for capital for public institutions. There is competition for capital funding, both for new buildings and the renewal of aging buildings and infrastructure.
- A number of public post-secondary institutions have been obliged to make cuts to programs and services because of financial challenges.
- In many jurisdictions across North America, the levels of funding and fees are contentious issues.

4.5 International Student Education

- In recent years, there has been a large increase in international students studying in Canada, with 60,500 “long stay” students choosing to study in BC in 2010.
- Provincial policy has been to generally support international students coming to BC, and the Province has adopted a policy of increasing numbers by 50% over four years.
- Students study in elementary, secondary, post-secondary, and private language schools.
- The market is very competitive among certain nations to attract international students (see also Section 5 re: the economic impact of international students).

4.6 Educational Tourism

- Educational tourism is the combination of education training and travel.
- It has been around since the 17th century, and attracts large numbers of people of all backgrounds and ages.
- Communities across the world compete for educational tourists.
- Tourism is impacted by world events and economic conditions, but internationally is generally expected to continue to grow. Asian countries, and especially China, are projected to generate significant increases in tourists. Educational tourism can be expected to be a part of general growth.

Economic & Social Impacts

5

5.1 Economic Impacts

There is the potential for a number of different types of post-secondary education initiatives in Whistler. Economic impacts will vary depending upon the type and scale of initiatives. Benefits will likely include:

- An increase in visitors;
- Local spending on goods and services;
- Direct increases in employment; and
- Indirect social and cultural economic benefits.

An increase in visitors – especially during off peak times – will benefit hotels, making fuller use of accommodation and hospitality services.

There have been a number of studies in North America that identify impacts of post-secondary education, but these primarily focus on the impact of institutions that are likely larger than what may be developed in Whistler.

Generally, there are multiple benefits to the local economy and the wider BC economy.

- An example of the impact of a formal institution is Douglas College (Coquitlam and New Westminster, BC) that has 9,500 full-time students. The local economy benefits with approximately \$59 million annually from operations and capital spending (2007).
- The Banff Centre, which has multiple initiatives, is estimated to have an average local impact of \$60 million (2012).

These institutions are the beneficiaries of extensive, long-term funding, and have their own unique contexts. In the case of the Banff Centre, this includes funding from the Government of Canada, the Province of Alberta, and variety of foundations.

5.2 International Student Market

The economic benefits of international students have been identified in a number of studies. Institutions often market their courses to international students, who generally are prepared to pay more for tuition than domestic students (Statistics below are from *Economic Impact of International Students in Canada*, Roslyn Kunin and Associates, Inc. Revised 2012).

- In Canada in 2012, there were 218,000 long-term international (staying for at least six months) students.
 - They created 81,000 jobs, and spent in excess of \$7.7 billion on tuition, accommodation, and discretionary expenses.
 - They generated more than \$445 million in government revenue, and approximately \$336 million in additional tourism benefits.
 - 37% of students are from China and South Korea.
- In 2010, international students in BC spent \$1.8 billion on tuition, accommodation, and other living expenses, creating almost 22,000 jobs and generating \$66 million in government revenue.

- Many school boards and universities have targeted international students to complement their enrolment. Thompson Rivers University, for example, has specifically sought international students, which represent about 12% of its student population. In 2005-06, it was estimated that the Kamloops region benefited in the amount of \$41.6 million, and that international students generated an additional annual revenue of \$12 million for TRU (See Kunin quoting *The Economic Impact of Thompson River University's International Students on the Kamloops Economy: 2005-06*, Seldon, 2005).

5.3 Integration with the Employer Community

Many post-secondary institutions follow a deliberate strategy of working closely with the local employer community to the benefit of employers and students.

Work integrated learning has many forms, including training for trades (e.g. apprenticeships), and co-op programs that are now well established across Canada. Examples include.

- Capilano University provides a range of programs related to Whistler's resort role, including a Tourism Management Co-op Diploma.
- In Ontario, Algonquin College jointly offers an outdoor adventure program with Canada's largest outdoor adventure company.

5.4 Social, Cultural & Community

Post-secondary institutions have a number of potential impacts, which are not strictly economic, but are often hard to measure.

- Historically, many post-secondary institutions were inward-focused, but have become increasingly interested in interrelating with their host communities.
- In BC, Simon Fraser has been promoting the concept of an "Engaged Community".
- Quest University sponsors events outside its campus. Whistler, for example, benefits from Quest's "library series" of lectures.

Other less quantitative and intangible impacts on a local community can include:

- Volunteering and fundraising by students and staff;
- Arts and culture – on and off campus;
- Publicly accessible amenity spaces and facilities; and
- Adding to the social diversity and culture of the community.

Although there is now a great deal of collaboration between host communities and their local post-secondary institutions, planning and development tensions may emerge as institutions initiate changes and expansions. Recent BC examples include:

- A proposal for a \$10 million hospice on the UBC campus in 2011; and
- A proposal for a multi-storey parking structure at the University of Victoria in 2012.

Useful resources for local community planning and post-secondary institutions include:

- A study by Yesim Sungu-Eryilmaz, and published by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy – *Town-Gown Collaboration in Land Use Planning and Development* – provides a good overall discussion about this in the US, but has relevance to Canada. The study includes a useful summary of planning practice, and "what works and what does not work".
- **Town Gown World: Town and Gown University Communities.** This is a Canadian-based website. (www.towngownworld.com).
- **The Society for College and University Planning (SCUP)** is an organization that sponsors conferences, workshops, and webcasts that include many on the topic of integrating post-secondary institutions and their local communities (www.scup.ca).

Community Consultation

6

The Task Force consulted with a number of groups and individuals, and sponsored an Open House, online information, and a questionnaire.

6.1 Consultation with Organizations

Nine groups met with the Task Force to assist with information on what type of initiative might work in Whistler, the market context, and what is involved in setting up an initiative. The individuals/groups volunteers were contacted, or had existing relationships with Whistler. Time and resources limited this number, but a wide range of input was obtained. Representatives of certain organizations consulted, for example Quest, acted solely as a resource and are not interested in providing a new educational initiative in Whistler. Others identified potential opportunities that could be explored further. Whistler International Campus described its specific proposal for a university. Key points from these meetings are summarized below. They reflect the comments of the presenters, not the Task Force.

6.1.1 QUEST UNIVERSITY

David Helfand, *President of Quest University*

- Quest University is located in Squamish. It is a recently founded, private, not-for-profit university that is a registered charity. It formally opened in 2007.
- Enrollment is now 425 students, with a planned maximum of 650 students.
- The University has a unique approach to teaching and learning.
- Provided useful background on the many challenges of setting up a new university.
- Recommended having a clear vision and goals about who the initiative will serve and how.
- Quest had substantial equity that enabled it to get off the ground, and a fund for operations so it could achieve long-term viability.
- It takes time to develop a new university – reputation and credibility are very important.
- Location of a new institution is very important, as it can facilitate integration with the host community.
- A realistic business plan is critical.
- A university can bring about social, cultural, and economic benefits.

6.1.2 UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (UBC) – SAUDER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Denise Baker, *Assistant Dean of Business and Gordon Ryan, Director of Open Enrollment*

- The Sauder School of Business and UBC have an international reputation.
- Partnering is important.
- Partner with a local entity.

- The more partners, the less risk.
- Planning an education initiative needs to include a clear definition of what is intended.
- There can be a community, regional, or international student population.
- To launch and manage programs takes large amounts of preparation, marketing, and funding.
- Executive training and MBA program offerings are highly competitive, difficult to recruit for, and expensive to run.
- Careful consideration is required for the type of courses/part courses that might be taught in Whistler.
- Sauder runs over 100 executive level programs, including a variety of degrees and diplomas.
- Sauder is interested in a partnership with Whistler.

6.1.3 COAST MOUNTAIN ACADEMY

David Baird, *Head of School* and Brad Gooderham, *Founding Faculty Member*

- Opening is scheduled for the fall of 2013.
- Currently located at the Quest University Campus in Squamish (with a long-term site in Paradise Valley), the Academy is a new, independent private school.
- The Academy will provide high quality, university preparatory education, based on 21st century delivery methods. It will be these methods that will contrast with traditional approaches to education.
- Very interactive, user-defined, collaborative, and open-sourced. Industry is demanding students with new skills – “not just repositories of rote learning”. The proponents stressed the era of internet.
- 21st century learning involves moving away from the traditional classroom with different configurations.
- A high quality of learning is achieved when education links theory to practice, using outdoor, experiential, and ecological education.
- Whistler has the opportunity to set new international standards of excellence in educational innovation. Opportunity to create the Whistler model from the foundation up, and reinvent the Sea to Sky corridor.
- Climate of learning, a contiguous climate that extends to student, community, family and business networks, regions and globally.

6.1.4 CAPILANO UNIVERSITY

Chris Bottrill, *Dean – Faculty of Global and Community Studies and Squamish Campus*

- Capilano brings a mandate for post-secondary education within the region.
- The University has a history of program delivery in the community and region. The Whistler post-secondary education market can be challenging. Viable numbers are necessary, and they were not able to get strong enrollment for all programs offered.
- The University expressed interest in working with RMOW – held discussions in September 2011, presented a proposal for partnership, and remains interested in supporting Whistler in its post-secondary education goals.
- A proposal from Capilano would probably involve a focus on outdoor recreation, tourism, and potentially business, event, and continuing education studies, and likely require partnerships.

- The University could put together a group of education partners, e.g. Okanagan specializes in wine tourism, Selkirk has ski management, Royal Roads University specializes in destination management, and Simon Fraser focuses on destination and resource management.
- The public post-secondary sector is under financial constraints. Although the University has satellite campuses (e.g., Squamish), there are no current resources for new infrastructure. Propose use of existing infrastructure.

6.1.5 WHISTLER EDUCATION GROUP (WEG)

Dr. Steve Milstein, Sue Adams, Roger Soane, Laurie Grant, and Doug Forseth

– *Committee Members*

- Citizens formed the *Whistler Education Group* in 2012 in response to changes in global tourism trends. The group has sponsored two studies, and has identified educational tourism, small to medium sized training, workshops, and seminars, as important opportunities for Whistler.
- Medium and large groups are marketed to by Tourism Whistler, and serviced well by the Whistler hotel sector.
- The needs of smaller sized groups of 10 to 50 people are often not being met, as the hotels and Whistler Conference Centre are frequently too expensive for them; therefore Whistler is missing out on this potential market.
- There exists underutilized space in Whistler that could serve the small and medium market.
- With the proper learning support structure and branding, Whistler could capture a significant piece of this market.
- An easily accessible database for locating and renting space for small educational initiatives is missing in Whistler. This contrasts with Vancouver that has more easily accessible information.
- WEG proposes to structure a virtual *Whistler Learning Centre* that can provide a central booking platform to bring together meeting space and services to facilitate the planning process.

6.1.6 EMILY CARR UNIVERSITY OF ART + DESIGN

Sadira Rodrigues, *Dean of Continuing Studies*

- Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design was established in 1925.
- Range of programs: engagement of 14 to 15 year olds to senior learners at the Masters level and lifelong learners.
- Current enrollment is 1,850 full-time, and 3,500 part-time students.
- Teaching areas within the fields of art, media, and design.
- Alumni fields of employment: arts and entertainment, design, advertising, marketing and public relations, creative services, internet, online media, media and journalism, publishing, printing, and architecture.
- Emily Carr University would be interested in working with Whistler on a number of potential opportunities in arts and culture.
- The University is currently working with Penticton.
- Working together would build on existing strengths and infrastructure, create unique destination-based learning opportunities that distinguish themselves locally and globally, and create boutique opportunities (local personal enrichment).
- Three initial program areas for partnership consideration:
 - Film and Video;
 - Museum and Curatorial Studies; and
 - Design and Sustainability.

6.1.7 VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (VSO)

Jeff Alexander, *President and Chief Executive Officer*

- The VSO was founded in 1919, and is one of the oldest professional symphony orchestras in Canada.
- Current live performances include approximately 140 concerts per year:
 - Mostly between September and June.
 - Annual audience of about 200,000.
- Additional audiences: CBC Radio broadcasts across Canada and the northern United States.
- VSO began educational activities in the late 1940s.:
 - Programs held at the Orpheum Theatre.
 - Approximately 100 classroom visits annually by musicians and conductors.
- The VSO School of Music opened about 18 months ago.
 - Located next door to the Orpheum Theatre.
 - Current enrollment: 700 students.
- Some ideas for Whistler:
 - The Vancouver Symphony Orchestral Institute at Whistler:
 - A resident symphony orchestra for the summer for serious music students aged 15 to 22;
 - Students would be required to audition, pay tuition, and pay for their accommodation; and
 - In residence, students would receive private lessons and chamber music rehearsals with a member of the VSO.
 - Once there are sufficient students, could create a student orchestra – “The Whistler Institute Orchestra”.
 - Could perform concerts at Whistler Olympic Plaza.
 - Concept already exists in numerous locations (e.g. Aspen, Colorado)
 - Institute for adult amateur musicians.

6.1.8 WHISTLER INTERNATIONAL CAMPUS

Doug Player, *Proponent, Whistler International Campus (WIC)*
and David Decant, *British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) School of Business*

- Proposed site for Whistler International Campus is 77 acres.
- Proposed building total 89,500 m², including 18,200 m² of education/support space, 1,780 m² of commercial support space, 66,700 m² of staff/student accommodation, 2700 m² of environmental research and development space, and an allowance for the long-term expansion of academic space to 4,000 m²
- Requires an *Official Community Plan* amendment and rezoning.
- Proponent has a business plan in place; phased development over 10 years.
- The international student market is growing strongly, and international students would comprise 60% of the student body.
- Campus model is most desired, and is considered the most appropriate model.
- WIC has identified partners for course delivery, including BCIT, the University of Northern BC (UNBC), and Fachhochschule Technikum Wien, and is negotiating with other academic institutions.

- WIC aims to be socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable.
- Courses would focus on tourism and sustainability, and include a Masters of Business Administration, culinary arts, and courses serving First Nations.
- Benefits identified by WIC include:
 - Projected student population of 1,500;
 - 900 international students, providing \$49.5 million in economic spin-off for Whistler;
 - 407 full-time jobs, increase in hotel nights (10,000), \$2.3 million in direct/indirect municipal taxes, \$200-300 million in site development;
 - Public access to facilities, and stimulus to Function Junction and Creekside, as well as lifelong learning opportunities;
 - Incubator space for spin-off business opportunities for the academic programs, and/or local environmentally-based businesses; and
 - Preservation, rehabilitation, and stewardship of the sensitive wetland and stream ecosystems.

6.1.9 CANADIAN SPORT INSTITUTE

Wendy Pattenden, *CEO, Canadian Sport Institute*; Roger Soane, *President and CEO*, and Dave Davenport, *Vice-Chair, Whistler Sport Legacies*

- Canadian Sport Institute provided an overview of BC athletes on the world stage, projected podium prospects, and sport education in BC, including sport schools. 415 of 1,800 carded national athletes train in BC.
- There is a strategic alliance between the Canadian Sport Institute and Whistler Sport Legacies.
- What do athletes need?
 - Decreased stress of balancing school and sport;
 - Flexible learning environments;
 - Education in proper training techniques;
 - Improved physical literacy; and
 - Sport and education systems working together on their behalf.
- Potential to enhance the Whistler brand, prestige and recognition.
- From a tourism perspective, people want to go where there is success. Athletes attract other athletes. A training centre is an asset to the community. Opportunities include meeting gaps in facilities for training for Gold Medal Standard, and the “business of sport”.
- Groups to be served include high performance athletes, official coaches, the performance public, and “weekend warriors.”
- Specific ideas include a dry tech centre (indoor training centre for winter sports), a 400-metre track, an international training destination, and “talent development programs”.

6.2 Open House

An Open House was held on April 4th at the Whistler Conference Centre from 5-8 pm. A series of 28 display boards presented information to the community, including draft goals and the potential range of education opportunities. The Project Manager made a PowerPoint® presentation on the work of the Task Force. A questionnaire was also made available at the event, and on the RMOW website for a week after the event. More than 116 people signed in at the Open House (note: not everybody signed in). All Task Force members attended the Open House.

Surveys were completed and returned at the Open House, or at the Municipal Hall (24 surveys) and 40 were submitted online for a total of 64 surveys. Not all respondents completed all questions. The table on page 28 shows the profile of those who submitted questionnaires. Based on the completions to this question (which were not 100%), 86% were full-time residents of Whistler, and more than 50% are working full-time.

The Task Force reviewed all the questionnaires, which are included as an attachment to this report. The form was designed to provide an opportunity for comments.

- Comments were generally supportive of education initiatives in Whistler.
- The value of education for residents, as well as visitors, was recognized.
- The proposal for the Whistler International Campus influenced a number of responses, focusing primarily on the concept of campus. Views of both support and concern were expressed.
- There were numerous comments on the opportunities identified. Examples include local training for trades, and a university medical facility.
- Concerns were expressed about impacts on Whistler's natural environment.
- A number of changes and additional materials were included in this report as a result of the Open House.

Full results of the Open House questionnaires are available in a separate appendix.



OPEN HOUSE ATTENDEES – Residence & Employment	
Residence	
1. Full-time resident of Whistler	52
2. Part-time resident of Whistler	5
3. Visitor	3
4. Business owner, but not a resident of Whistler	0
5. Employee in Whistler, but not a resident of Whistler	0
TOTAL RESPONSES	60
Employment	
Doing volunteer work	17
Fully-retired	6
Semi-retired	11
Managing home/homemaker	6
Unemployed and looking for work	1
Working full-time	37
Working part-time	8
Studying full-time	2
Studying part-time	4
TOTAL RESPONSES	92

Notes:

1. Not all those responding completed questions on residence and employment.
2. Employment questions generated **duplications**. Most volunteers were also retired or fully employed. Duplications occurred for those fully employed and studying part-time.



THE RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

Key Considerations for an Education & Learning Initiative

7

The Task Force has identified 10 key considerations for education initiatives in Whistler. These have been drawn from the discussions with guests from the education sector and other research.

7.1 Institutions May Strengthen Whistler's Social and Cultural Fabric

Institutions can bring cultural and educational events, further social diversity, international visitors and students, volunteerism, and philanthropic fundraising by students and staff. Quest University, for example, provides on-campus public art performances, and off-campus lectures through its Library Series.

7.2 Capital From Public Sources is Difficult to Obtain

The Province of BC has a well-developed process for considering capital funding applications for public institutions, recognizing the competition for limited public funding. Public sector funding is currently difficult to obtain for post-secondary education. Quest University, a non-profit organization, received a large, one-time donation from a private donor, which was critical to its birth, and a smaller endowment for ongoing operations.

7.3 There are Risks

The competitive nature of post-secondary education means that there are risks. These take many forms. It may be difficult to obtain funding for the establishment of a program, and the program may not attract a sufficient number of students to ensure its sustainability. There may be significant potential resort community impacts associated with a failed venture.

7.4 Location is Critical

In considering campuses, the most successful “town and gown” initiatives and institutions derive synergy from each. Proximity between the campus and daily life of the town is key. It was noted that Quest University would have been different had it been in downtown Squamish. Quest University, Simon Fraser University, and the University of Northern B.C. are all examples of institutions on hilltops.

7.5 Scale Affects Resources, Planning and Implementation

Course development, hiring accredited personnel, and effective marketing to target learners requires considerable investment of time and financial resources. Depending on the scale and proposed venue, this may need community resources and infrastructure investments.

7.6 Well-Defined Quantifiable Goals

Clear goals, clear vision, and passion are all essential for success. Initiatives without clear goals have resulted in lower learner participation, and, sometimes, early termination of the initiative.

7.7 An Established Reputation is Essential

In a competitive environment, a sound reputation with the intended targeted learners is essential for success. A new institution faces stiff competition. Initiatives should be compatible with, and further the Whistler brand and international reputation as a world-class mountain resort community.

7.8 Development Will Take Time – Every Initiative Starts Small

Developing an initiative, whatever its form, will take a number of years to establish, and a number of years before local benefits are realized. Any initiative will probably commence at a small scale.

7.9 Partnerships are Powerful

Many post-secondary institutions partner with each other to complement their offerings, and achieve administrative economies. However, this does not necessarily reduce risk – in tough times “appendages can be cut.”

7.10 A Solid Business Plan is Required for Progress

A business plan is critical for determining direction and viability. A key first component is a feasibility analysis that will explore whether a proposal could work in Whistler, and will include an analysis of the target market(s) potential numbers, competition, and risk. Assuming the proposal appears feasible, the business plan will build on this information with further detail on target markets, course types, marketing approach, staff resourcing, start-up and operating budgets, cash flow requirements, risk management, contingency planning, and timelines.

Guiding Principles, Goals & Objectives

8

A key deliverable of the Task Force is provision of criteria for evaluating post-secondary educational opportunities. To that end, the Task Force has drafted a list of Principles, Goals and Objectives. These can assist the RMOW in both guiding and evaluating potential post-secondary education initiatives. Two guiding Principles, nine Goals, and twenty-two Objectives are proposed.

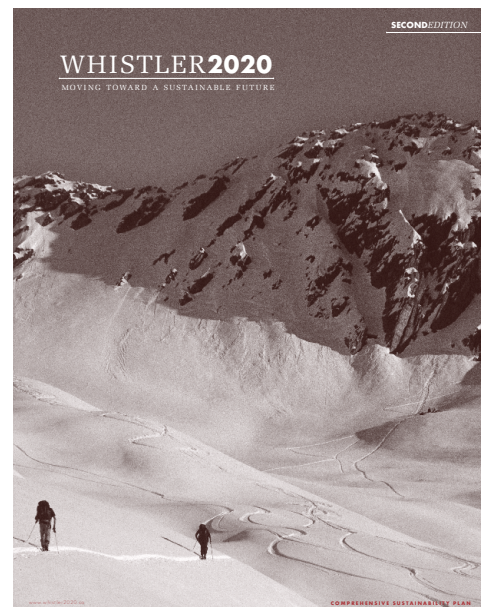
8.1 Guiding Principle

8.1.1 ALIGNMENT WITH WHISTLER'S APPROVED POLICY DOCUMENTS

The RMOW has well-developed policy frameworks, informed through community engagement, which guide its future. These include the:

- *Whistler 2020*;
- *Official Community Plan*; and
- *Corporate Plan*.

Any potential for post-secondary education must demonstrate its alignment with these documents.



8.2 Goals & Objectives

GOALS		OBJECTIVES
1	Protect & enhance Whistler's identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Reinforce Whistler's identity as a unique, world-class, sustainable, four-season mountain resort community. ii) Provide high quality initiatives.
2	Complement & diversify the tourism economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Attract new Canadian and international visitors to Whistler, who come to learn, research, and teach. ii) Increase local spending through learners, faculty and staff, and the institution. iii) Support proposals that will leverage other benefits. iv) Where feasible, partner with and advance other community initiatives & goals (e.g. Cultural Tourism Plan) to strengthen shared objectives. v) Contribute to the overall economic viability of the Resort Community.
3	Support Whistler's accommodation & commercial sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Improve occupancy and use of facilities in hotels, especially during shoulder and off-peak seasons. ii) Improve the patronage of stores, hospitality, and other services, especially during shoulder and off-peak seasons. iii) Encourage the delivery of programs and courses that are relevant to local employers. iv) Provide opportunities for learner networking with local employers.
4	Enhance education opportunities for Whistler residents & visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Provide for a diverse cross-section of learners, including local, life-long learners of all ages, high school graduates, First Nations, and international visitors.
5	Enrich Whistler's social & cultural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Provide educational opportunities in arts and culture. ii) Increase opportunities for, and patronage of, social and cultural local amenities and activities – performing and visual arts, library, locally-based cultural groups. iii) Enhance Whistler's international diversity and appeal.
6	Capitalize on Whistler's sports environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Support active-living educational activities. ii) Support educational sport initiatives. iii) Utilize existing infrastructure where feasible.
7	Demonstrate that an initiative will be financially feasible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Demonstrate economic viability in the "competitive future". ii) Ensure the business plan addresses risk, and carries contingencies. iii) Develop milestones to ensure project viability.
8	Demonstrate consistency with community capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Ensure consistency with Whistler's character, scale, and social fabric. ii) Demonstrate infrastructure support. iii) Ensure environmental sustainability.
9	Locate appropriately, encouraging synergies with other educational initiatives & land uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Contribute to community and village vitality. ii) Ensure location is consistent with the RMOW's environmental policies.

Opportunities for Consideration

9

With life-long learning and educational tourism, there are many different types of learners, and a very wide range of post-secondary education opportunities that may benefit Whistler.

The Task Force has chosen to place opportunities into six main categories. Potential target learners are identified for each broad category. The table in Section 9.7 provides a summary of the spectrum of opportunities, organized by category and select features, including target learners. The Task Force stresses it has not researched or evaluated these in detail.

9.1 Arts

The arts offer a very broad range of education and learning opportunities. Visual arts include painting, sculpture, ceramics, and photography. Performance arts include dance, music, theatre, and filmmaking.

Initiatives in this category could be sponsored by existing arts organizations and/or in association with new ones, such as the new Audain Art Museum.

Both the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (VSO) and Emily Carr University would be strong organizations for the RMOW to partner with an arts education.

The VSO already has an established relationship with Whistler, which could be expanded. The VSO's vision and mission include a commitment to music education, and the VSO offers a wide range of educational programs. There could be opportunities for the VSO to develop educational programs in Whistler using existing infrastructure.

Emily Carr University opportunities could include courses on museum and curatorial studies (specializing in Aboriginal art, in association with the proposed Audain Art Museum and the First Nations Cultural Centre), or film and video to build on the Whistler Film Festival.

The range of initiatives in the arts category could be sponsored by multiple bodies independent of each other, or could be coordinated by an umbrella organization. A model for the latter is The Banff Centre, which started eighty years ago with a single drama course.

The ages, incomes, and home locations of potential learners varies widely, and includes local, regional, and Canadian residents (including the Aboriginal community), as well as international "educational tourists".

Initiatives within this area could easily use existing infrastructure, both private and public, to commence operations.

9.2 Sport

Whistler's existing strength in sports could provide a basis for a range of educational opportunities using existing facilities. Whistler has a number of facilities from the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games that are managed and operated by Whistler Sport Legacies. These include the Athletes Centre in the former Olympic and Paralympic Athletes Village.

The Canadian Sport Institute met with the Task Force, and indicated its interest in working with the RMOW, identifying a number of potential initiatives. These included meeting gaps in facilities for training for Gold Medal Standard, and the business of sport opportunities.

Groups to be served included high performance athletes, official coaches, Canadian and international athletes, the "performance public", and "weekend warriors."

A sports initiative may also combine with education opportunities on wellness.

9.3 Executive Education

Small in scale, these programs are offered for learners who are senior administrators in the private, public, institutional, and non-profit sectors. The costs of these programs, and therefore, the resulting tuitions, are high. They may be solely delivered in Whistler, or in partnership with another institution, with some segments delivered elsewhere.

Courses could conclude certificates, or be part of post-graduate diplomas or Master's programs. Subjects covered can be broad, and include leadership and business. This type of initiative would need to involve an educational institute with a known reputation, such as the UBC Sauder School of Business. Learners in these programs are likely to generate high per capita expenditures locally. The environment for these courses is very competitive.

Target learners would include provincial, Canadian, and international learners.

This initiative would most likely utilize existing infrastructure. If successful, this may evolve to use purpose-designed space in the long run.

9.4 Employer/Professional Skills Training

There are already several private organizations offering language courses in Whistler. This initiative would see largely private organizations, or small entrepreneurs, organizing Whistler workshops, seminars, or longer training in a wide range of subjects. It would take advantage of Whistler's existing meeting rooms and other spaces, in both the private and public sectors. The Whistler Education Group's research has identified opportunities for this, but also the current absence of an easily accessible database of space availability to facilitate it.

The target learners would primarily be regional.

9.5 Select Programs – Public Institution

This initiative would see a post-secondary institution, such as Capilano, as the responsible regional institution providing one or more courses/programs. Examples include trades, tourism, culinary arts, or film. Capilano may partner with other educational institutions.

Engagement with local employers may be possible through co-op placements. Courses would form part of certificates, diplomas or degrees.

Potential learners would be primarily regional residents, with some national and international.

This initiative would likely continue to use existing infrastructure for facilities. If it developed strength, over time it might evolve to utilize a small satellite campus.

9.6 Full Campus

A new full campus in Whistler is unlikely to be a public institution similar to Capilano, but would be either private or non-profit. There is an existing proposal, through the Whistler International Campus (WIC), for a privately funded university campus. A presentation was made to the Task Force on this proposal by WIC. The campus is planned to serve 1,500 students, of whom 60% would be international. WIC has identified five partners, including BCIT and UNBC. The capital value is approximately \$270 million. Further information is available in Section 6.1.8.



9.7 Summary Spectrum

SELECT FEATURES	ARTS	SPORTS	EXECUTIVE EDUCATION	EMPLOYER PROFESSIONAL/ SKILLS TRAINING	SELECT COURSE(S) OR PROGRAMS	FULL CAMPUS
1 Target Learners	Canadian/ international	Canadian/ international/ high performance/ "performance public", officials	Canadian/ international/ senior public, private & non-profit/ provincial & national executives	Canadian/ regional	Regional	Canadian/ international
2 Education Type	Educational tourism credit & non-credit courses	Winter sports indoor training – ski/ snowboard & other, high performance & community access, officiating, fitness, wellness	Certificates or part of post-grad diploma or Masters at sponsoring institution, e.g. leadership & business	Range of small niche programs – training workshops/seminars, "educational tourism"	Credits for certificates, diplomas, degrees, e.g. trades, tourism, film, culinary arts by public post-secondary institution	Diplomas/ degrees
3 Start-up Facility	Existing infrastructure – commercial/public	Some use of existing facilities + new purpose-built facilities	Existing infrastructure – commercial/public	Existing infrastructure – commercial/public	Existing infrastructure – commercial/public	Existing infrastructure or purpose-built
4 Potential Long-term Facility Form	Purpose-designed centre + continued use of infrastructure	Purpose-designed centre	Continued use of infrastructure	Continued use of infrastructure	Small satellite campus/ existing infrastructure	Large scale with full accommodation
5 Location Adjacencies	Village/Village North/ Olympic Plaza/ Art Museum/ multiple events throughout community	Whistler Athletes' Centre	Village/Village North	Village/Village North	Village/Village North	Subject to land availability – easy access to Village or other commercial centres
6 Sponsor Sector	Non-profit	Non-profit/ profit	Non-profit or public post-secondary institution	Individual entrepreneurs/ small organizations	Public post-secondary institution	Private/ non-profit
7 Financial Considerations	Ongoing subsidies may be required	Can be self-supporting	Self-supporting	Self-supporting	Public sector funding for start-up & ongoing	Upfront major donation required & endowment
8 Comparable Initiatives	Banff Centre	Private – Woodward at Copper Mountain, Non-profit – Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence, Victoria	UBC Sauder School of Business, Queen's School of Business, the Niagara Institute	Existing language schools in Whistler, Banff Centre, RRU, etc. – leadership workshops & many private consultant organizations	Capilano at Mt. Currie/ Squamish	Quest University, Whistler International Campus (proposed)
9 Comments	Could build on existing Whistler initiatives (e.g. Art Museum). Would depend heavily on "Whistler brand".	Could be sponsored by Canadian Sport Institute; there are private sector models in US	Small competitive field; to be successful; a start-up would likely need to build on an existing institution	WEG has identified some opportunities for this segment	Capilano U is regional institution & has satellite campuses; most likely use existing infrastructure	Requires significant capital funding & land; international students likely the primary market.

9.8 A Co-ordinating Organization?

The Task Force analysis demonstrates that there is a considerable range of opportunities that can be developed in Whistler. Many of these will occur as a result of individual, corporate, or volunteer initiatives with little or no role by the RMOW. However, others will only occur if the RMOW is pro-active (see Roles, Section 10). During the course of consultations, the prospect of some form of coordinating centre or institute arose. A Whistler Centre for Business and the Arts was in operation in Whistler, and comparisons have also been made with the Banff Centre. Summary information on the Banff Centre is provided below. It illustrates how an initiative can evolve over time.

The Task Force recommends against setting up a coordinating institute or organization at this time. This may evolve over time, however, in the short term, this is likely to divert resources, time, and energy to the setting up of an organization, rather than securing initiatives. There is a strong volunteer tradition in Whistler, and existing organizations that can partner with the RMOW to support education initiatives.

Founded in 1933 by the University of Alberta, the Banff Centre has evolved from its original single course in drama. The Banff Centre is a public, board-governed, specialized arts and culture institution, operating under the authority of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* of the Province of Alberta. The Banff Centre's core area of specialization is the Arts, offered at the professional, post-graduate level. Programs are characterized by applied research, independent study, creation, collaboration, production, performance, and dissemination of new work. The Centre offers specialty programming in Mountain Culture and the Environment, and fosters the development of creative solutions to global environmental and sustainability concerns, through programs and symposia that explore issues relating to mountain areas and communities in Alberta, Canada, and internationally (abbreviated from its Mandate 2008).

In 2011/2012, the Centre:

- Produced 450+ events, performances, readings etc., and presented to more than 80,000 people;
- Offered 100+ programs;
- Placed more than 3,800 individuals in its programs, and a further 1,880 participated in its leadership programs; and
- Provided a range of culture-specific programming for Aboriginal leadership.

In 2012, the Institute's revenues were \$57 million. The Institute receives core funding approximating 28% of revenues from Alberta's *Enterprise and Advanced Education*, with the largest components coming from the Centre's conference, leadership development, and hospitality operations. Over the last four years, the Centre has experienced the impacts of the world economic uncertainty with a 42% decline in revenues from conferences and leadership development programming.



THE RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

Understanding Risks

10

Whether the provider is a public, private or non-profit entity, every educational initiative carries risks, and it will be important to understand and evaluate these risks when considering new initiatives. In turn, risk must be balanced against potential benefits. The information provided in this report has stressed the dynamic and competitive nature of the post-secondary education environment, and can assist both providers and the RMOW in risk assessment and mitigation.

Risk assessment is now a common practice in business. Assessment techniques can be varied in sophistication and complexity, depending on the scale of the initiative. A common and easy-to-use technique is a “risk register” that identifies and rates potential risks, and identifies mitigation measures.

Typically, the development of an education initiative will go through a series of stages, including business planning, a variety of financial and other approvals, course design, planning and securing a venue, marketing, enrolment, staffing engagement, start-up, and operations. There are risks associated with all of these stages, such as marketing that may not secure sufficient learner interest, funding support that may not be forthcoming, or subsequent enrolment that may be inadequate for financial viability. For large-scale institutional proposals, there are the risks associated with the ability to fund and recover large capital investments, and the ongoing costs for operations.

Where the RMOW has a role in connection with an education initiative, it should understand the potential risks and undertake due diligence that is appropriate to the scale of the initiative.

Risk is important to understand not just for the provider and learners, but also for the potential impacts on Whistler’s current image, its vision for 2020, and its accommodation and real estate sectors. Failures in the field of education are not likely to greatly impact these areas, unless the failure is of a single large institution, or there were numerous, sequential smaller failures.



THE RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

A Framework for Moving Forward

11

11.1 The Prospect for Success: Whistler's Competitive Advantage

The Task Force believes it is possible for Whistler to attain the vision set out in *Whistler 2020* for learning and education.

This report has demonstrated that the environment of post-secondary environment is dynamic, rapidly changing, and very competitive. The internet is an immense change agent for post-secondary education, and it has reduced and/or removed the importance of location in many aspects of education. However, in the judgment of the Task Force, "location" will remain important for many areas of education, and Whistler has many advantages in creating and sustaining opportunities for learning and teaching.

This report has noted growth in demand for education for life-long learning. This demand will come from both Canadian and regional residents, but also from a wide range of international learners. International travel is projected to grow significantly. Educational tourism, by both domestic and international tourists, can also be expected to grow. It is recognized this growth will always be subject to world economic and nation-specific economic conditions, and international events that may disrupt travel.

To be successful, however, the providers of education will need to be careful in the selection of initiatives, focusing on those that capitalize on Whistler's unique environment, location, and other strengths and avoiding those where other communities/providers will be more competitive.

Whistler's key advantages:

- An established world-class resort;
- Outstanding sport and recreational advantages, and a developing cultural sector, including a diverse visitor base and international appeal;
- Distinct and high quality natural and built environments;
- Extensive infrastructure – accommodation, meeting rooms, and public spaces;
- A strong resort industry and organization;
- Proximity to a population of 2.6 million in the Lower Mainland;
- Vancouver International Airport;
- Existing partnerships and initiatives with strong track records and reputations to build on (e.g. Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Audain Art Museum, Canadian Sport Institute);
- Existing education initiatives;
- A buoyant entrepreneurial and voluntary sector;
- A vibrant, green building community: and
- An engaged, educated, and motivated community.

11.2 A Framework

1. Utilize the Principles, Goals, Objectives, and Information Developed by the Task Force

These will provide guidance to the RMOW in:

- Considering initiatives it may launch; and
- Evaluating requests from providers for assistance or approvals.

The chart at the end of this section illustrates how the principles, goals, objectives, and information can be used. These will also assist providers in developing their proposals.

2. Adopt a Pragmatic and Community-Based Approach

The Task Force recommends the RMOW adopt a strategic approach that is simple, effective, and easily implemented, using RMOW staff, community partners, and volunteers from the community for the next three to five years. As indicated in Section 9, the Task Force recommends against setting up a separate coordinating organization at this time.

3. Recognize a Variety of Roles for the RMOW

There are, and will be, a variety of individuals, organizations, and companies of all types and sizes that will be active in the field of post-secondary education in Whistler. The RMOW does not have to perform a role in all of these endeavors. The RMOW has a choice in the roles it may wish to perform in the area of post-secondary education. In undertaking any of these roles, it is recommended that the Principles, Goals, and Objectives be used by the RMOW in its consideration of action.

The Task Force identifies four main types of roles for different types of initiatives.

REGULATORY

This role involves the RMOW and municipal approvals.

A current example is the application for OCP amendment and rezoning by the Whistler International Campus. There may be other education initiatives that require municipal regulatory approvals, including land use, servicing, and infrastructure commitments.

PASSIVE

RMOW responds to proposals by others with limited action. This action may involve endorsing the proposal in principle and providing letters of support for initiatives requiring funding. The RMOW does not take the initiative.

FACILITATION

RMOW responds to initiatives by others, but assists through facilitation. This may involve a range of actions, for example agreeing to make a RMOW property available for short-term use by a non-profit provider, and contributing to overall marketing information and infrastructure information.

PRO-ACTIVE

RMOW is the prime mover initiating the action. The RMOW determines the target and form of education, and takes a lead role to create an initiative to secure a provider.

An example of a pro-active role by the RMOW would be to determine a program initiative that it would like to see developed. This could be undertaken by the issuance of an Expression of Interest (EOI), and subsequently a Request For Proposal (RFP) to potential providers. It would then assist the selected provider to develop the initiative.

4. Set a Time Frame

The RMOW should consider identifying priorities for the next three to five years. At the end of this time, an evaluation of the Strategy should be undertaken.

5. Determine Infrastructure availability

The RMOW, with Tourism Whistler and other parties, should prepare an inventory of the types, sizes, and availability of building spaces available for use in the resort for educational initiatives. The RMOW may wish to work with the Whistler Education (WEG) in this regard. Although a surplus of visitor accommodation has been identified, information on meeting spaces that could be used to accommodate educational initiatives would be valuable.

6. Prioritize Opportunities for Pro-Action

The Task Force recommends that the RMOW use the spectrum of opportunities identified as a framework for considering education initiatives. The RMOW should identify in the order of five initiatives with which it will take a pro-active role over the next three years to five years. These will need to be consistent with available RMOW and community resources.

Key features should include:

- Creating early success and momentum for Whistler's vision for post-secondary education;
- Providers with a strong reputation and track record that will help build a profile for Whistler in the education field;
- Initiatives that are relatively easy to establish; and
- Initiatives that build upon synergies, and leverage current efforts and opportunities in terms of benefits for Whistler.

7. Ensure Strong Partners

Partnering will be the basis of a pro-active role by Whistler. Partners will include:

- Education providers;
- Funding partners; and
- Partners in promotion – for example Tourism Whistler and the Whistler Arts Council.

8. Establish Adequate Funding

The expenditure involved in education initiatives will largely be borne by providers, and the costs by learners. Some courses may need support from other sources, such as a foundation, but that role is not recommended for the RMOW. However, to be successful, some funding by the RMOW will likely be necessary. Expenditures should be based on an analysis of the risks and “leverage potential”, and benefits for the community. This report has noted, for example, that the Banff Institute receives funding from a range of governments, foundations and agencies.

Some examples of funding could include:

- Possible “seed money” (cost sharing) for business plan development for the initiatives that have been selected through an RFP by the RMOW;
- A contribution to start-up costs; and
- A contribution to marketing information.

9. Invest in and Facilitate Marketing Information

The RMOW, in partnership with Tourism Whistler, should develop some marketing information that highlights Whistler's advantages and opportunities for life-long learning and post-secondary education. Target markets would be both potential learners and providers. This initiative should be consistent in messaging, start small, and grow as the education initiatives grow.

10. Seek Advice from Community Resources

The RMOW should continue close contact with the community, and draw upon it as post-secondary initiatives are developed. The significant community resources in Whistler can be drawn upon for advice through a variety of stages as initiatives evolve, including input on EOIs and RFPs, and review of submissions and feasibility analyses.

11. Ensure Due Diligence

In considering proposals for post-secondary education, the RMOW will need to undertake due diligence that is appropriate to the scale of the initiative. This should include a review of:

- Provider's past experience;
- Business plan;
- Risk analysis for the municipality/community;
- Benefits to the Resort Community;
- Complementary initiatives, and
- Consistency with the Principles, Goals and Objectives.

The Task Force Report contains background information, and a set of Principles, Goals, and Objectives that can be used by a proponent in preparing for an initiative, and by the RMOW when evaluating proposals for support.

1

RMOW POLICY CONTEXT

Is the proposal consistent with RMOW's policies?

2

THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

How does the proposal take account of this environment?

3

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACTS

What are the economic and social impacts of this initiative – are they positive for Whistler?

4

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR AN EDUCATION AND LEARNING INITIATIVE

Does the initiative take into account the key considerations? (e.g., Is the location appropriate? Are there well-defined goals?)

5

GUIDING PRINCIPLES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Does this initiative align with the principles, and meet the goals and objectives identified for post-secondary education in Whistler?

6

DUE DILIGENCE

Has due diligence been undertaken for this initiative, including a business plan and risk analysis?



THE RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

APPENDIX :

Task Force Members' Biographies

Bevin Heath Ansley

Bevin Heath Ansley brings over 30 years of managing training, education, and human resources in major corporations and post secondary education, including work for the past 12 years with Kwantlen Polytechnic University in the positions of Director, Center for Co-operative Education and Careers Services; Associate Dean, Learner Resources; and Co-op Development Coordinator. In addition, her expertise includes work as a human resources consultant to small businesses, primarily involved in supervisory training and establishing performance management systems with training contracts for organizations such as Peach Arch Hospital, the City of White Rock, Peace Arch Community Services, and Koch Johnston Insurance Ltd.

Heath Ansley has extensive volunteer experience, including work as a team lead at the Whistler Sliding Centre during the 2010 Winter Games. She has a Master of Arts in Leadership and Training from Royal Roads University and a Bachelor of Arts in English and Communications from Simon Fraser University. She resides in Whistler.

Shannon Byrne Susko

Shannon Byrne Susko serves as the Chief Executive Officer and President of DST Subserveo, Inc., and has over 20 years of experience building technology platforms and technology companies for the financial services industry. She co-founded Paradata Systems Inc. and served as its President and Chief Executive Officer. Prior to joining Paradata, she worked with her own software consulting firm.

Byrne Susko serves as Chairman of the Board at AceTech. She was recognized as one of Canada's Top 40 under 40 for the year 2000, and was awarded the Sarah Kirke Award for Canada's leading Women Entrepreneurs in 2006.

She has a Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Science from Saint Mary's University, and a Master of Computer Science from the Technical University of Nova Scotia. Susko resides in Whistler.

Terry Deutscher

Terry Deutscher worked for most of his career as a Professor of Business Administration at the Richard Ivey School of Business, from which he retired in 2010. During his time at the Ivey School of Business, he served as Director of Research and as Associate Dean - Human Resources. He was also the founding Director of the School's innovative venture into teaching its Executive MBA Program via video-conferencing. Previously he served on marketing faculties at Ohio State University and Cornell, and while at Ivey, he held visiting appointments at IMD, an international management development institute in Lausanne, Switzerland, and at the University of British Columbia.

Deutscher has a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Alberta, and MBA and PhD. degrees in Business from Stanford University.

Deutscher is a volunteer at the Whistler Public Library and serves on its Board of Trustees. He has owned property in Whistler since 1993 and has been a full-time resident since 2009.

David Dale-Johnson

David Dale-Johnson is Executive Professor and the Stan Melton Chair in Real Estate at the Alberta School of Business at the University of Alberta. An expert in urban development and real estate economics and finance, he has also worked as an international consultant and as an executive in the real estate business. While Director of the Real Estate Program at the University of Southern California, he held appointments in the Marshall School of Business and the Sol Price School of Public Policy. He has also taught at the Sauder School of Business at the University of British Columbia, the University of California at Berkeley and Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, where he assisted in the development of real estate institutions in an emerging economy.

Professor Dale-Johnson completed a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Science in Business Administration at the University of British Columbia and a PhD at the Haas School of Business at the University of California at Berkeley.

Dale-Johnson has skied in Whistler since 1968, and owned property in Whistler since 1990.

Allen Puckett

Allen Puckett has co-founded and held senior management positions including CEO in a number of privately held health care services and information technology businesses since 1993. He previously held senior executive positions with a number of public companies and provided top-level consulting services to companies around the world as an associate and partner with McKinsey & Company.

Puckett has served on the Washington Dental Service Board of Directors since 2002. In addition to participating on other committees, he currently serves as chair of the Investment Committee. He has previously served on boards of a number of for-profit companies as well as the board of Family Services of King County.

Puckett received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and his law degree from Harvard Law School, where he received a national Nathan Burkan Prize for his thesis on legal protection for computer software. He purchased a home in Whistler in 1986, and moved to Whistler permanently in 2008.

George Stuart

George Stuart has a background in education. His professional career included 20 years of service as Vice President, Administration and Finance at Simon Fraser University, as well as two terms as a School Trustee in West Vancouver, and one term as Chairman. Prior to arrival in Vancouver and SFU, Stuart worked as the Eastern Region Director of Finance for the Steel Company of Canada. He also spent several years as General Manager of the Printing Division of the Montreal Gazette.

He has an MBA from the University of Western Ontario. As a volunteer, Stuart spent ten years on the Board of the United Way of Greater Vancouver.

Stuart first came to Whistler in 1984, and was a long-time second-home owner. He moved permanently to Whistler in 2005.



THE WHISTLER TASK FORCE ON LEARNING & EDUCATION

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