



RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

4325 Blackcomb Way TEL 604 932 5535
Whistler, BC Canada V8E 0X5 TF 1 866 932 5535
whistler.ca FAX 604 935 8109

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

PRESENTED: December 17, 2024 **REPORT:** 24-109
FROM: Planning Department – Policy **FILE:** 7729.04
SUBJECT: 2024 INTERIM HOUSING NEEDS REPORT

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

That the recommendation of the General Manager of Climate Action, Planning and Development Services be endorsed.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive Information Report No. 24-109 and the 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report, attached as Appendix A.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) is legislatively required to complete an Interim Housing Needs Report (HNR) by January 1, 2025. The purpose of this Council report is to present the Interim HNR to Council, attached as Appendix A.

Information Report Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

DISCUSSION

Key Ideas

The following section provides a high-level overview of key ideas presented in this report.

New Pro-Active Planning Legislative Framework

- The RMOW is legislatively required to complete an Interim HNR by January 1, 2025.
- In June 2024, the *Housing Needs Report Regulation* (Regulation) was amended to provide a new methodology that must be used to calculate the 20-year and five-year housing need.
- Local governments must then review and, if necessary, update their official community plans (OCP) and zoning bylaws by December 31, 2025, to provide residential land use capacity to accommodate the number of housing units identified.
- The first regular HNR is then required to be completed by December 31, 2028, and every five years thereafter.
- Beginning in 2028, OCPs and zoning bylaws must be reviewed and, if necessary, updated within two years of completion of the HNR.

Interim Housing Needs Report

- The Interim HNR will be added as an Appendix to the [2022 RMOW HNR](#) and addresses the following legislatively required items:
 - Identifies the number of housing units legislatively required to meet current and anticipated need, defined by the province, in Whistler for the next five and 20 years:
 - Five years – 1,572 dwelling units; and
 - 20 years – 5,639 dwelling units.
 - The number of housing units required to meet Whistler’s housing need in the next five and 20 years are calculated per the methodology in the Regulation using the BC HNR Calculator provided by the University of British Columbia’s (UBC) Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART) project and endorsed by the province.
 - A statement about the need for housing in close proximity to transportation infrastructure that supports walking, bicycling, public transit or other alternative forms of transportation.
 - Describes the actions taken by the RMOW and its subsidiaries to reduce housing need since 2022 when the last HNR was received.

Next Steps

- The Interim HNR will be attached as an Appendix to the 2022 RMOW HNR and will be published on the RMOW website.
- The RMOW must consider the Interim HNR when updating the OCP. The OCP and “Zoning and Parking Bylaw No. 303, 2015” (Zoning Bylaw) must be reviewed and, if necessary, updated to accommodate the number of housing units identified to meet 20-year housing needs by December 31, 2025.
 - The OCP will be reviewed and updated as necessary; staff anticipate bringing forward an OCP amendment project approach for Council’s consideration in early 2025.
 - Based on preliminary analysis the 20-year need is already accommodated as required in the Zoning Bylaw because of “Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing) No. 2440, 2024” (SSMUH Bylaw) and existing residentially zoned and undeveloped parcels.
- The HNR is required to be updated by December 31, 2028 and every following five years.

Background

The province states that HNRs play an important role in supporting the development of housing policy and action and informing land use planning. The legislative requirements for HNRs were first introduced in 2019 and required local governments to collect data, analyze trends and present reports that describe their community’s current and anticipated five-year housing needs. Additionally, HNRs are required to provide statements about specified key areas of local housing need. The RMOW’s first HNR was received by Council in [May 2022](#) (2022 HNR).

To implement the aims of the Homes for People plan, in 2023, the province amended the *Local Government Act* (LGA) to introduce new requirements for HNRs. Additionally, the amendment requires local governments to prepare Interim HNRs by January 1, 2025. In June 2024, the Regulation was amended to provide a new methodology that must be used to calculate the 20-year and five-year housing need.

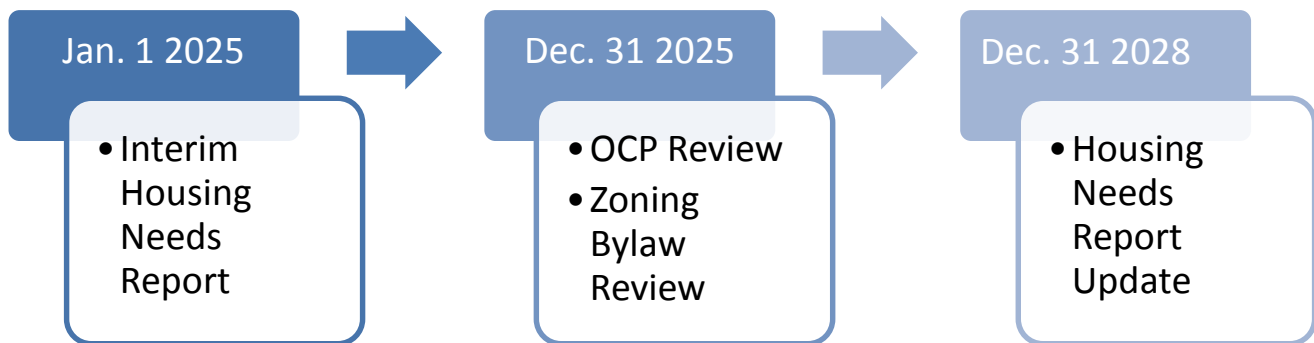
Interim HNRs must include the following items, which can be added to the 2022 HNR as an appendix:

- The number of housing units required to meet current and anticipated need for the next five and 20 years;
- A statement about the need for housing in close proximity to transportation infrastructure that supports walking, bicycling, public transit or other alternative forms of transportation; and
- A description of the actions taken by the local government, since the date the local government last received an HNR, to reduce housing needs.

After completing the Interim HNR, municipalities must review and, if necessary, update their OCP and zoning bylaw by December 31, 2025 to accommodate the number of housing units identified to meet the 20-year housing need.

The first regular HNR is required to be completed by December 31, 2028 and every five years thereafter. OCPs and zoning bylaws must be reviewed and, if necessary, updated within two years of completion of the HNR.

The following figure summarizes the legislatively required process between 2025 and 2028:



Analysis

As noted, the Interim HNR will be attached as an appendix to the 2022 HNR. The following subsections describe how the Interim HNR addresses legislative requirements and identify next steps.

Number of Required Housing Units

To calculate the total number of housing units their communities will need in the next five and 20 years, local governments are required to use the HNR Method developed by the province. The HNR Method is described in detail in the Provincial HNR Method Technical Guidance attached to Interim HNR as Schedule I.

To support municipalities, the HART project at UBC developed the provincially endorsed HNR calculator released in July 2024. The HNR calculator is an online tool, which automatically calculates housing needs using the HNR Method by jurisdiction. The full results produced by the HNR calculator for Whistler are attached as Schedule II to the Interim HNR.

The HNR Method consists of the following six components and provides the total number of housing units needed in the next five and 20 years, presented in the Interim HNR and shown in the table below.

Whistler Total 5-year and 20-year Housing Need

Component	5-Year Need	20-Year Need
A. Extreme Core Housing Need	68.34	273.37
B. Persons Experiencing Homelessness	17.72	35.45
C. Suppressed Household Formation	175.48	701.92
D. Anticipated Growth	886.03	2,931.23
E. Rental Vacancy Rate Adjustment	10.27	41.07
F. Additional Local Demand	414.08	1,656.32
Total New Units – 5 years	1,572	
Total New Units – 20 years		5,639

The Interim HNR identifies that to meet Whistler’s 20-year housing needs, development potential for 5,639 new units is to be accommodated within the Zoning Bylaw. In Whistler, with currently identified development projects, zoned projects, and the adoption of SSMUH Bylaw, the required number of units are permitted under the Zoning Bylaw.

At this time, it is not required to demonstrate how the existing development potential within the Zoning Bylaw will contribute to meeting specific needs (i.e., housing supports, unit types or affordability) that may be associated with the six HNR Method components. The components are only used to calculate the total unit numbers and will be more fully addressed through new OCP policies in 2025.

It is noted that while the Interim HNR uses the most recently available 2021 Statistics Canada Census data, the RMOW’s 2022 HNR uses 2016 Statistics Canada Census data. By December 31, 2028 the HNR will be holistically updated with the most recent Statistics Canada Census data, expected to be collected in 2026.

Statement about Housing in Proximity to Transportation Infrastructure

The Interim HNR must include a statement about the need for housing in close proximity to transportation infrastructure that supports walking, bicycling, public transit or other alternative forms of transportation. A review of the relevant Whistler policies and context demonstrates support for locating housing in close proximity to transportation infrastructure, and accordingly, the following statement has been included in the Interim HNR:

New purpose-built housing, especially employee rental housing, should be prioritized in locations with close proximity to transportation infrastructure that supports walking, rolling, cycling, alternative forms of active transportation, and public transit, and required to promote community livability, achieve climate-related objectives and reduce traffic congestion.

Housing Action

The RMOW and its subsidiaries continue to make significant progress on housing action. The RMOW Housing Action Plan (HAP) was endorsed by Council in May 2023 ([Administrative Report No. 23-059](#)). The HAP is organized using six housing action categories to reflect the areas where the RMOW can respond to challenges and contribute to employee housing initiatives, and identifies recently completed, ongoing and in-progress actions. The Interim HNR uses the HAP framework to report on ongoing, in-progress and completed housing actions since completion of the 2022 HNR.

Next Steps

The Interim HNR will be attached as an appendix to the 2022 HNR and will be published on the RMOW website.

The proactive planning legislative framework requires local governments to provide residential land use capacity to accommodate the identified housing needs by updating their OCPs and zoning bylaws by December 31, 2025. Additionally, the OCP must include housing policies respecting each class of housing need in the HNR.

As described above, the 20-year need is already accommodated as required in the Zoning Bylaw. After the Interim HNR is received, the OCP will be reviewed and updated as necessary; staff anticipate bringing forward an OCP amendment project approach for Council's consideration in early 2025.

The HNR is required to be updated by December 31, 2028 and every following five years.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Council Authority/ Previous Decisions

Provincial Legislation and Regulation

Sections 585.1-41 and 790 of the LGA require local governments to prepare HNRs and Interim HNRs, respectively, subject to the regulations, and require that they are received by Council by resolution at a public meeting and are published on the local government's website.

The Regulation requires that municipalities and regional districts must prepare an Interim HNR by January 1, 2025, using a prescribed HNR Method to calculate five-year and 20-year housing need in the community.

[May 10, 2022: Information Report No. 22-062](#) – Whistler HNR: completed in 2022 and assesses current and anticipated five-year housing needs. The 2022 HNR provides statements about specified key areas of housing need. The Interim HNR will be attached to the 2022 HNR as an Appendix.

[May 16, 2023, Administrative Report No. 23-059](#) – RMOW HAP: outlines actions to address Whistler's housing needs and challenges; it identifies priority actions to be undertaken in 2023 and 2024. The HAP framework is used to report on housing action in the Interim HNR.

2023-2026 Strategic Plan

The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan outlines the high-level direction of the RMOW to help shape community progress during this term of Council. The Strategic Plan contains four priority areas with various associated initiatives that support them. This section identifies how this report links to the Strategic Plan.

In the 2023-2026 RMOW Strategic Plan, housing is identified as a top priority. The Strategic Plan particularly identifies the implementation of the HAP, which was endorsed by Council in May 2023.

Strategic Priorities

Housing

Expedite the delivery of and longer-term planning for employee housing

Climate Action

Mobilize municipal resources toward the implementation of the Big Moves Climate Action Plan

Community Engagement

Strive to connect locals to each other and to the RMOW

Smart Tourism

Preserve and protect Whistler's unique culture, natural assets and infrastructure

Not Applicable

Aligns with core municipal work that falls outside the strategic priorities but improves, maintains, updates and/or protects existing and essential community infrastructure or programs

Community Vision and Official Community Plan

The OCP is the RMOW's most important guiding document that sets the community vision and long-term community direction. This section identifies how this report applies to the OCP.

The proactive planning legislative framework requires municipalities to align OCPs with HNRs. Municipalities must review and update OCPs every five years to plan for enough homes for current and anticipated 20-year housing needs and include housing policies respecting each class of housing need in the HNR. After the Interim HNR is received, the OCP must be reviewed and updated as necessary by December 31, 2025. Staff anticipate bringing forward a project approach for Council's consideration in early 2025.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The Planning Department budget provided for staff resources associated with the completion of this report.

LÍLWAT NATION & SQUAMISH NATION CONSIDERATIONS

The RMOW is committed to working with the Lílwat People, known in their language as *L'il'wat7úl* and the Squamish People, known in their language as the *Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* to: create an enduring relationship; establish collaborative processes for planning on unceded territories, as currently managed by the provincial government; achieve mutual objectives and enable participation in Whistler's resort economy.

Lílwat Nation and Squamish Nation are required to be consulted on the future OCP amendment associated with the Interim HNR and related provincial legislation. Further information on the proposed consultation with Lílwat Nation and Squamish Nation will be brought forward for Council's consideration as part of the OCP amendment project approach.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

Inform Consult Involve Collaborate Empower

To meet the provincial legislative timeline and requirements, the Interim HNR is limited in scope. In accordance with section 790(5) of the LGA, the Interim HNR will be published on the RMOW website.

REFERENCES

Appendix A – Interim Housing Needs Report

SUMMARY

In accordance with recent legislative requirements, this report presents the Interim HNR to be attached as an appendix to the 2022 HNR. The Interim HNR:

- Identifies the number of housing units legislatively required to meet current and anticipated need as defined by the province, for the next five and 20 years, calculated using the HNR Method (five years – 1,572 dwelling units; 20 years – 5,639 dwelling units);
- Provides a statement about the need for housing in close proximity to transportation infrastructure that supports walking, bicycling, public transit or other alternative forms of transportation; and
- Describes actions taken by the RMOW and its subsidiaries to reduce housing needs since the last HNR in 2022.

SIGN-OFFS

Written by:

Joanna Rees,
Planner

Reviewed by:

Courtney Beaubien,
Manager of Planning – Policy

Mike Kirkegaard,
Technical Director of Planning

Dale Mikkelsen,
General Manager of Climate Action, Planning
and Development Services

Virginia Cullen,
Chief Administrative Officer