Community Engagement Strategy

WHISTLER HOUSING AUTHORITY

WHISTLER
HOUSING
AUTHORITY

helping to make **Whistler**
the place you call **home**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Whistler Housing Authority's Community Engagement Strategy is a framework for effectively communicating with the community. The WHA recognizes that successful communication is a two-way process and is committed to finding valuable methods to do so, and to encourage all opinions to be heard. Building trust and making informed decisions will contribute to achieving the goal of strengthening the resident housing program and continuing to house at least 75% of our workforce within Whistler. Identified in this strategy are the target audience, community engagement goal and objectives, the current issues, implications and action plans and finally the means of evaluating success. By implementing this strategy the Whistler Housing Authority is dedicated to creating, implementing, and sustaining effective engagement with the community.

2. IDENTIFIED TARGET AUDIENCE

The current target audience is defined as including the following key constituents:

- Resident Housing Owners
- WHA Waitlist Applicants
- WHA Tenants
- Mature Action Community
- Local Employees
- Local Employers
- Private Sector Developers
- Whistler Tax Payers
- Municipal Council
- RMOW Staff
- Local media
- Squamish, Pemberton, SLRD, First Nations

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOAL

The Whistler Housing Authority's over-arching community engagement goal is defined as follows:

To create and articulate clear channels for engagement with the community so that the WHA can make informed and effective decisions that will strengthen the resident housing program, build community trust and help to maintain our target of housing at least 75% of the workforce within Whistler.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

To achieve the aforementioned goal, the following series of key objectives have been defined:

WHA Community Engagement Objectives
• The community-at-large participates in opportunities to engage with WHA Board and staff.
• Resident housing policies and procedures are accurately understood by the public.
• Resident housing occupants and applicants actively communicate with the Whistler Housing Authority.
• Community trust in the resident housing program is nurtured and enhanced.
• WHA Board & staff are able to make informed decisions based on broad community feedback.
• Local employers participate in housing solutions for the community.
• RMOW staff, Council and the WHA continue to have a collaborative relationship to ensure the ongoing success of the resident housing program.
• Local media effectively express the benefits and the challenges of resident housing for the community.
• Regional partners collaborate on solutions to corridor housing issues.

5. ISSUES, IMPLICATIONS AND ACTIONS

As part of the community engagement process, the following matrix outlines the key issues and possible implications that inform the positioning and execution of this strategy. Each issue is presented in association with an action.

Issues	Implications	Actions
Current resident housing restrictions are not well understood (RFR, rentals, appreciation formulas).	Lack of understanding causes confusion and strains relationship with WHA. Administrative burden for WHA having to answer a myriad of questions regarding restrictions and process.	Roundtable discussions. Meetings with ownership strata. Meetings with waitlist applicants. Develop & distribute orientation package to new resident housing purchasers. Press releases and advertisements in local newspapers. Ongoing communication on WHA website
Perception that the WHA makes decision in a vacuum without feedback from the community. Concern that WHA is not serving the best interests of resident housing community. Belief that future occupants and affordability are being favored to the detriment of current owners.	Reluctance to support resident housing program. Mistrust in WHA decision making process. Damaging public comments that WHA is out of touch with community. Low levels of engagement.	Roundtable discussions. Meetings with ownership strata. Press releases and advertisements in local newspapers. Ongoing communication on WHA website Email notices to waitlist applicants, tenants, and owners. Send out Resident Housing Satisfaction survey annually in conjunction with annual occupancy declarations & post results on WHA website.
Uncertainty in demand causing some to doubt as to whether there is a need for any additional resident housing units.	Potential lack of support and opposition to new resident housing possibilities.	Distribute vendor survey to vendors of resident housing. Give presentations on resident housing program to local community groups and larger businesses.
Feeling of unpredictability causing some resident restricted owners to claim the resident housing program is not what they understood it to be.	Negative speculation that the WHA cannot be trusted and that the rules of the agreement can be changed. Threat of legal action.	Roundtable discussions. Meetings with ownership strata. Meetings with waitlist applicants. Develop & distribute orientation package to new resident housing purchasers. Press releases and advertisements in local newspapers. Ongoing communication on WHA website
Focus on investment return rather than the primary objective of owning a home in Whistler.	Willingness to use resident restricted housing as an investment that can be cashed-out of to buy housing in neighboring communities.	Meetings with waitlist applicants. Press releases and advertisements in local newspapers. Give presentations on resident housing program to local community groups and larger businesses.
Failure of some to see the importance to Whistler of workforce living locally.	Reduced incentive to support local housing solutions. NIMBY'ism.	Press releases and advertisements in local newspapers. Give presentations on resident housing program to local community groups and larger businesses.
Large segment of the community does support the resident housing program and WHA initiatives.	WHA receives positive feedback and reinforcement of support for housing initiatives. Resident housing product continues to be viewed as desirable.	Press releases and advertisements in local newspapers. Give presentations on resident housing program to local community groups and larger businesses.

6. POSITIONING

Assessment of the facts and implications noted above lead to the development of the following positioning statement:

The Whistler Housing Authority is dedicated to active listening and informed, effective decision making to help make Whistler the place you call home.

7. EVALUATING OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Monitoring feedback will help the WHA to evaluate the success of our community engagement strategy. Indicators for measuring whether our engagement and communication process is achieving our Community Engagement Objectives may be either qualitative or quantitative and might include:

> Productive meetings with stakeholders

> Positive and/or constructive feedback included in surveys

> Number of positive media stories

> Number of letters to the press opposing or supporting resident housing policies

> Number of people attending WHA events