

WHISTLER 2050

A Destination Designed for the Future



Tourism Whistler/Mark Mackay

Looking Back to Look Ahead

In 2022, we came together for a unique community workshop: *The Whistler Sessions*. It was a bold experiment in collaboration, gathering residents, business owners, First Nations partners, and local leaders to imagine Whistler's future. What emerged were four powerful yet unsettling scenarios, none of which emerged as a preferred future we would like to see. Instead of clarity, we surfaced a shared anxiety: about climate, housing, infrastructure, belonging, and whether Whistler could continue to thrive under the weight of growing expectations.

But within that discomfort came clarity. We realized the future wasn't something to predict, it was something we had to shape. That's when the idea of *destination stewardship* came into focus. We began to ask not just how tourism could be managed, but how it could actively support our town and help us build the Whistler we want to become. From this, the *Smart Tourism* initiative was born - a

framework to guide collaboration, investment, innovation, and decision-making in ways that honour the land, strengthen our community, and ensure that tourism works for Whistler, not the other way around.

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The following vision is the result of a shared journey with our partners in the Smart Tourism Committee. It invites us to step into a future we want to live in - one shaped by purpose, designed with care, and built together. This vision is a living guide, intentionally open and evolving. It is meant to inspire current and future collaborators to imagine boldly and act collectively as we shape the next chapter of tourism in Whistler.

How We Got Here

Whistler stands at a crossroads. For many within our community, the challenges of tourism are becoming more prominent than the opportunities, and reactive decision-making and fragmented leadership will only exacerbate the issue. An outlook of climate variability, growing housing challenges, infrastructure strain, and a drive to remain competitive, reveal that what's at stake isn't just Whistler's future. It's how it feels to belong here and to build a life here.

Smart Tourism is a concept the municipality has introduced to help the region consider how tourism looks as a solution to these headwinds. This concept is bigger than simply implementing new strategies. Around the world, leading destinations are proving the future of this industry is something to proactively design.

At both the national and city levels, destinations are intentionally reshaping their visitor economies to enhance, rather than overwhelm, local communities. Global frameworks, like the Global Destination Sustainability Index and Destination Canada's Wealth & Wellbeing Index, are setting new benchmarks for what it means to be a thriving destination. This isn't just a localized shift; it's a global reimagining of what it means to be a great place to visit and an even better place to live.

So, how does Whistler get ahead of this and design its future alongside the world's most forward-thinking destinations? It requires:

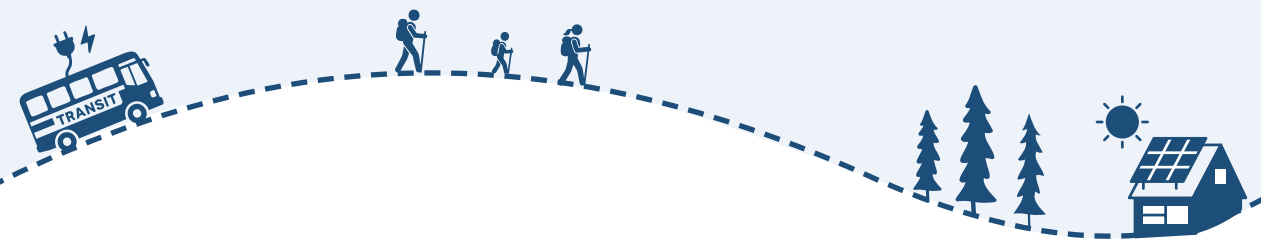
Shared Stewardship that empowers and unites local voices, Indigenous leadership, and cross-sector collaboration.

Proactive investment in infrastructure, housing, and sustainable tourism models.

A renewed commitment to Whistler's identity, ensuring that growth doesn't dilute its distinctive and deeply rooted mountain culture and history.

Leveraging technology as an enabler, not a distraction, to enhance visitor experience while protecting community well-being.

By embracing a long-term, adaptive approach to tourism, Whistler is on track to secure its place as a leader in sustainable mountain tourism.



A Glimpse into the Future

It's 2050, and Whistler is more than a destination - it's a living example of a resilient mountain resort. The heart of the community beats strong, woven together by those who call it home and those who return time and again, drawn by something they can't find anywhere else.

"More" doesn't mean bigger, louder or busier. It's more meaning, more voices, more depth, more discovery, and more ways to belong. A place where you're not just a spectator, but a participant, where you can uncover more of yourself as you discover the mountains.

On any given day, a seasoned local and a visiting family might share a chairlift ride, trading stories as they ascend. A group of lifelong friends, now in their 70s, might carve down fresh groomers before heading to a lakeside sauna for an après soak. A new resident might find connection in a communal workshop, learning from a First Nations elder about the land's deep history.

The wild remains - protected, revered, and at the center of it all. Even as climate shifts, Whistler has adapted, thriving as an all-weather mountain town. Adventure isn't seasonal or exclusive - it's a year-round invitation.

Whistler has never been one to wait for the future. Instead, we built it together - boldly, collaboratively, and with an unwavering commitment to what makes this place special. Now, let's step into what this future looks like.



Tourism as a Solution, Not a Burden



Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre/Logan Swayze

Tourism has been the economic backbone of Whistler for many years, but long before it became a world-renowned destination, these lands were stewarded by the Indigenous peoples of Liłwat7úl and Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, who understood the deep, reciprocal relationship between people and place. In 2050, Whistler continues to honour that connection where its success is not measured just in visitor numbers, but in how well residents, workers, and the broader community thrive.

By putting people at the center of tourism, Whistler has created a place where both locals and visitors feel a sense of belonging. Tourism doesn't just sustain the town - it actively strengthens it, supporting the infrastructure, services, and way of life that make this place special. Growth is thoughtful, ensuring that the benefits of tourism extend to those who call Whistler home, while protecting the land that has drawn people here for generations.

Imagine...



A town where tourism is a shared responsibility, shaped through collaboration between residents, First Nations members, businesses, and visitors to ensure it enriches the community, environment, and economy.



A thriving workforce with stable tourism-based careers, where those who help make Whistler extraordinary can afford to live and build their futures here.



A destination where every tourism dollar contributes to something bigger - funding housing, transit, biodiversity initiatives, and the preservation of Whistler's natural and cultural heritage.



A place where visitors aren't just spectators but active ambassadors in stewardship, learning from Indigenous guides, supporting local businesses, and engaging in meaningful cultural experiences.



The Soul of Whistler

By 2050, Whistler's culture will continue to be central to its experience. At its core is a deep connection to the land, a shared respect for the mountains, and a way of life that thrives on adventure, creativity, and stewardship. This culture is inseparable from the traditions and knowledge of the Liłwat7úl and

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Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, whose presence and knowledge enrich Whistler's identity. An aligned truth and reconciliation journey defines guiding principles that are embedded into how the community evolves, ensuring that Whistler's story is told with depth, respect, and inclusivity.

Mountain culture is more than recreation—it is a mindset, a way of being, and a source of identity for those who call Whistler home. It is found in the rhythm of the seasons, the shared stories of the slopes and trails, and the traditions that bind people together, whether they have lived here for generations or are experiencing the mountains for the first time. Whistler's strength lies in this depth, in the soul that makes it more than just a destination but a place where people feel connected—to nature, to each other, and to something bigger than themselves.

Imagine...



A Whistler where mountain culture is celebrated not just in outdoor pursuits but in the arts, storytelling, and shared experiences that bring people together.



A Whistler where Indigenous knowledge is integrated more holistically into our experience, from guided walks that share traditional ecological knowledge to immersive storytelling gatherings offer visitors a deeper connection to the land, its history, and the living cultures that shape it.



Visitors leaving Whistler not just with memories, but with a renewed perspective - carrying home a deeper respect for the land, a commitment to stewardship, and an appreciation for the balance between adventure and responsibility

Any Season, Every Reason

Whistlerites have always embraced the wild, thriving in every season, in any weather. By 2050, this fearless mountain spirit continues to be an inspiration, inviting others to do the same. Rather than resisting change such as climate shifts, changing seasons, or evolving visitor expectations, Whistler

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has leaned in, adapting with creativity and purpose. Through innovation and an unshakable connection to the land, it has redefined what it means to be a true all-weather mountain destination.

Every season is now the best time to visit. Whistler is no longer reliant on perfect conditions; instead, it has turned unpredictability into an asset. Carefully curated experiences ensure that each visit feels intentional - regardless of the weather or budget. This transformation has not only strengthened Whistler's global reputation but also made the resort more accessible overall. A wider range of people can now enjoy the mountains, as greater thought is given to diverse experiences, many of which don't require a pass. The result is a more inclusive, energized community, proudly known for its year-round mountain lifestyle.

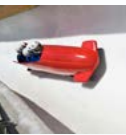
Imagine...



Families gather at a mountainside adventure hub, gearing up for an all-weather experience. They set out on a guided e-bike tour along forested trails, where seasonal art installations and interactive storytelling stations bring Whistler's history and ecology to life.



A summer afternoon where glacier-fed pools, shaded and accessible alpine structures, and cooling stations make soaring temperatures an afterthought.



Elite athletes train year-round - alongside residents and visitors - at Whistler's world-class high-altitude performance center, using Whistler's built and natural environment as a competitive edge.

Siegrist Architecture



Tourism Whistler/Justa Jeskova



Technology that Supports, Not Distracts

Technology is not a gimmick in Whistler - it's a quiet enabler, seamlessly enhancing the experience without pulling people away from the mountains, community, or culture. It exists to remove friction, not create distraction, ensuring that visitors and residents can immerse themselves in the moment rather than the screen.

As a global hub for Rec-Tech innovation, Whistler attracts athletes, researchers, and entrepreneurs pushing the boundaries of outdoor equipment, adventure technology, and sports science. High-performance training centers, alpine wellness retreats, and nature-immersive experiences have expanded beyond traditional skiing and biking, making Whistler a year-round destination for exploration, learning, and innovation.

Imagine...



An app that seamlessly guides visitors to the best experiences for the day's conditions, reducing congestion and increasing time spent enjoying Whistler.



AI-powered conservation monitoring that helps protect fragile ecosystems while keeping trails open.



Smart ticketing and transit systems that make getting around effortless - no lines, no stress, just more time for adventure.



A group arriving via an electric regional shuttle, seamlessly accessing transit, bike rentals, and activity bookings through a single digital platform - without ever feeling "plugged in."

Connected Communities, Shared Success



Tourism Whistler/Justa Jeskova

The Future is Ours to Shape

The Whistler of 2050 won't happen by chance - it will be built through bold decisions, collective action, and an unwavering commitment to what makes this place extraordinary. The challenges we face today such as climate shifts, housing shortages and infrastructure demands are not roadblocks; they are calls to action.

Our future is not a fixed point - it's a journey, and this vision will evolve as we do. Its success lies in continuous adaptation, shared leadership, and the courage to lead where others hesitate. The choices we make today will determine whether Whistler remains not just a place to visit, but a place to live, work, and belong.

Tourism in Whistler is more than a single destination; it is a journey through a well-connected, thoughtfully designed region where movement is effortless, and each area contributes to a greater whole. With shared transit solutions, aligned economic development, and a commitment to sustainability, we elevate the visitor experience while preserving the character of the places we call home.

A seamless, forward-thinking approach to regional tourism uses collaborative policy development and planning to strengthen Whistler's identity, enrich our communities, and ensures that as we grow, we do so with purpose - together. Through this, Whistler maintains its intimate, small-town feel as transit innovations reduce congestion and infrastructure developments mean that movement around town is effortless.

Imagine...



A zero-emission regional transit system that reduces peak day congestion on the highway and is utilized by both workers in the sea to sky and visitors from further afar.



Whistler develops a reputation as a low carbon destination where travellers arriving at YVR can access the mountains using zero-emission transportation



Everything in the Sea to Sky is now accessible by transit, making it easier than ever to explore. Visitors experience a region where crowds feel nonexistent, and where vibrant energy and quiet escape exist in perfect balance.



Tourism Whistler/Olivia McHugh

An Invitation to Imagine, and Act

This vision is more than a look ahead, it's a call to reimagine what Whistler can be, and to inspire the change required to get us there. It invites everyone who loves this place - residents, visitors, businesses, leaders, and partners to see themselves in the story of Whistler's future.

This vision is not a finish line - it's a blueprint for bold ideas, creative solutions, and shared aspirations.

In August, we will celebrate Whistler's 50th anniversary, a moment to honour how far we've come. But we're also looking further down the trail. As we set our sights on Whistler's 75th in 2050, we're

using this vision as our compass. Smart Tourism will guide us as we move forward, not just with optimism, but with focus, commitment, and the belief that the best version of Whistler is still ahead of us.

This vision is not a finish line - it's a blueprint for bold ideas, creative solutions, and shared aspirations. It's meant to spark new thinking and serve as a tool that helps us imagine, and then design, a future where Whistler thrives for everyone. To bring this vision to life, we need to hear what success in Smart Tourism looks like to you. Follow the QR code to find out how to engage and share your thoughts. The next chapter starts now - join us in shaping Whistler's future.

