

**WHISTLER: A CASE STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF AMENITY MIGRATION
ON THE RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER AND SURROUNDING
ENVIRONS**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the nature of amenity migration, its effects and related planning strategies and practices through a case study of the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) and surrounding environs. The goal of this study is to provide a descriptive overview of amenity migration in relation to the RMOW and region, primarily from the perspectives of selected key stakeholders as well as documentation from several RMOW and regional sources. For some time, the RMOW has been known as a world class destination resort and a progressive leader in various aspects of planning and sustainability.

Interviews with sixteen key stakeholders revealed a range of familiarity with the concept of amenity migration and considerable knowledge about economic, social and environmental consequences. The concept of amenity migration was not used in RMOW and regional planning strategies and practices, raising some question about its conceptualization. A major effect of amenity migration was the lack of affordable housing, with subsequent local and regional effects. Significant planning measures perceived as effective included the Whistler Housing Authority, Vision 2020 and a regional growth strategy, currently under development.

The study identifies the importance of a regional framework for strategic planning and the need for more research, in particular, to enable mountain communities to track their amenity migrants. Two key issues emerged: whether a “resort community” is viable; and the role of planners in relation to serving the diverse interests of stakeholders in these locales. The thesis concludes with implications regarding the continued use of the concept of amenity migration and the importance of the concept for planners, policy development and planning practice related to the phenomenon.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COC: Canadian Olympic Committee

GODA: Garibaldi Olympic Development Association

IOC: International Olympic Committee

RMOW: Resort Municipality of Whistler

SCARP: School of Community and Regional Planning

SLRD: Squamish - Lillooet Regional District

VANOC: Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games

WHA: Whistler Housing Authority

PREFACE

Undertaking research that addresses amenity migration, tourism, resort and recreation-based community development, urban planning and mountain environments represents a gelling of many of my personal interests and life experiences.

My first travel and tourism experiences began at an early age; at three months I was whisked away on a plane with my parents to Ontario and then, Phoenix six months later. It was a blessing to have parents with a passion for travel and careers that involved a great deal of international and domestic travel, often with me in tote.

As I became older, I continued to travel more of the world on my own or with my significant other. I became more interested in travel not only for the sake of being exposed to other cultures and geographic locales, but also as a means of becoming more aware of the multiple facets of the tourism industry. I learned about different living patterns and conditions, and the manner in which host communities were affected by tourism and globalization, at least from an outsider's perspective.

Academically, my undergraduate degree is in psychology, with a specialization in organizational psychology. This degree appealed to my interests in human behavior, organizational structure and the consideration of how one's environment affects human behavior. Awareness of the nature versus nurture debate led me to think increasingly about the importance of the physical environment in human development and quality of life. As a student at the University of Calgary in the late 1990s, I pursued studies in other areas such as sociology, human and population geography, tourism and leisure studies, and urban planning. My interest in cities and urban planning led to my enrolment and thesis research for my Master's degree in planning at the School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP), University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC.

Why conduct a study focusing on mountain regions, amenity migration and tourism resort planning?

As a child and young adult who loves participating in many sports, skiing and recreation-oriented lifestyles were the norm for me and many others who grew up in Calgary, Alberta. Situated on the plains and rolling foothills, Calgary is a gateway city to one of Canada's most scenic regions - the Rocky Mountains.

While growing up, I naively thought of the mountains as simply a scenic backdrop in which to pursue one's weekend outdoor recreational activities. These sentiments are likely common to many Calgarians who seem largely un-preoccupied by the impacts of our prolific recreational usage on these mountain environments and the host communities within their valleys. The mountain towns of Canmore and Banff were little more than great nearby weekend playgrounds where some enjoyed a recreational or second home away from the perils of modern city life. I recall a recent article in a Canmore newspaper which identified Calgarians as Calgreedians.

While living in Vancouver attending SCARP, I experienced life in another western Canadian gateway city to the mountains, this time to the beautiful Coast Mountains of British Columbia. In my opinion, many Vancouverites possess even stronger outdoor lifestyle and recreation-oriented values than Calgarians. The RMOW is nestled approximately 120 km to the north of Vancouver in the Coast Mountains and is the winter and summer playground for many of the city's weekend warriors.

As an avid life long skier, newly emerging snowboarder and someone attracted to learning more about tourism and planning, I became increasingly interested in the RMOW and its surrounding region. Whistler-Blackcomb is one of North America's largest and busiest ski resorts and rated consistently by ski and travel magazines as one of the best resorts in North America. Accordingly, Whistler has earned a global reputation as one of the preeminent ski area destinations in the world. It has also gained prominence as a leader in community sustainability practices. I was fascinated by the possibilities of learning more about the region and the phenomenon of tourism development and resort town planning, but I didn't know exactly how to approach or combine my interests effectively.

Without a specific thesis topic in mind, I began reading in subject areas that appealed to me. Much of the tourism related literature focused on describing particular aspects of the tourism industry, such as how to develop tourism from a business perspective, development of sustainable tourism practices (a popular theme in the last 15 years) or community consensus building in communities seeking to develop small scale tourism initiatives. Tourism literature which focused on land use effects related to tourism or the manner in which tourism development can potentially affect and alter a host community's sense of place or physical character and how to minimize these impacts seemed more limited. Research literature on the long term impacts of tourism development also seemed less common. Some ski resort specific literature was available but difficult to track down, often non-academic in nature and predominantly focused on ski hill operations and management strategies.

Much of the urban planning literature I reviewed seemed to overlook or minimize the significance of the relationships between tourism and urban planning. Tourism and its relationship to land use, community sense of place, image and contested space were rarely discussed in the planning literature I encountered, with the exception of some literature pertaining to urban planning and the hosting of tourism mega-events such as the Olympic Games.

There seemed to be a variety of professional disciplines involved in issues related to mountain resort tourism planning. Because of the many angles from which these professionals approached the subject matter, I found the information difficult to synthesize. Subject matter ranged from the study of global mountain cultures and peoples to development and migration in the North American mountain west from sociological or historical perspectives to physical plans for mountain resort based developments produced by landscape architecture and design firms.

Easily accessible information or descriptive literature geared toward planning and management strategies for minimizing potentially negative effects associated with tourism and development growth pressures on the social, environmental and economic

conditions of mountain communities seemed sparse. Some entailed prescriptive generalizations; others were narrowly focused on site specific environmental management strategies. I began to question the role of the planner in tourism and resort based community planning. Could planners operate in a proactive planning capacity to develop and define the scope and characteristics of tourism and resort community development from the early stages of resort planning? They seemed to be working in a more reactive manner, often scrambling to develop policy and planning strategies after problems associated with tourism and subsequent community growth pressures had arisen.

Nonetheless, I decided to immerse myself in the subject and was introduced to the concept of amenity migration at the Sustainable Mountain Communities conference in Banff, AB June, 2003 by Laurence A.G. Moss, a planning consultant and researcher who coined the term amenity migration in 1985/6 while conducting a planning study for the Alberta government's Department of Trade and Economic Development. This study was responsible for the identification of two key factors which led to the recognition of the concept of amenity migration, namely, a greater societal valuation of the natural environment as a place for leisure and living experience and the growing importance of living culture as an asset to place.

Discovering this emerging societal migratory phenomenon which connected harmoniously with so many of my interests was rewarding. Embarking on this research, although always interesting, has certainly had its ups and downs, not unlike one of Whistler's black diamond runs.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

Migration has been a predominant characteristic of humankind. Movements of people have occurred for many reasons ranging from human survival to the pursuit of self-actualization. In today's world there are likely many more influences and factors which affect migration patterns than in the past. People have, however, long sought the pleasures of life in pastoral settings, on beaches near lakes and oceans, and in idyllic mountain settings. Although variously defined, this migration trend has been identified as amenity migration. The essence of amenity migration entails the settlement of people on either a permanent, part time or intermittent basis in places which are perceived by them to be rich in environmental and/or cultural features/amenities (Price, Moss & Williams, 1997; Moss 2003). Research in this area has explored the causal factors for this type of migration as well as its effects.

A prominent type of amenity migration has been the movement of people into mountain regions. Not everyone is drawn to life in the mountains, but for some, mountains are an awesome presence in the world, attracting people to them and providing inspiration and resources for spiritual, cultural and economic pursuits. Because of their enormity, grandeur, mystery, extreme climates and terrain, they provide a perspective within which humans can understand their place relative to the power of the natural environment. Jacques Diouf, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, cited in Price (2002) expresses a similar sentiment:

Wherever we may come from, however high or small the hills or mountains may be in the land of our birth, we are all mountain people. We are all dependent on mountains, connected to them, and affected by them, in ways we may never have previously imagined. (p.11)

Mountain regions gained global prominence at the highest level at the UN Earth Summit (UNCED) in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. At this conference, the Summit's primary product "Agenda 21" was developed as a plan for action for the 21st Century and endorsed by the governments of nearly all of the world's nations. Realizing the potential of this

conference to heighten global awareness of mountains, a group of scientists and development experts with expertise in mountain regions formed a group called “Mountain Agenda.” The group succeeded in getting a chapter on mountains into “Agenda 21,” thereby giving mountains the same significance as other global issues such as climate change, desertification and the deforestation of tropical areas (Price, 2002).

Chapter 13 of Agenda 21, entitled “Managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development,” identified the critical importance of mountain ecosystems to the global community and stressed the need for protection of these ecosystems and the sustainable development of mountain regions (Godde, Price & Zimmerman, 2000). The Chapter emphasized the proper management of mountain resources and the socio-economic development of mountain people. According to Price (1999, as cited in Godde *et al.*), the Chapter included two program areas: “(i) generating and strengthening knowledge about the ecology and sustainable development of mountain ecosystems, and (ii) promoting integrated watershed development and alternative livelihood programs” (p.2).

The word “fragile” refers to environments that are particularly susceptible to damage by human activities, with relatively slow rates of recovery. The word also applies to human populations who depend on mountain environments that are susceptible to change by unpredictable human actions (Harrison & Price, 1997 cited in Godde *et al.*, 2000).

In recognition of the importance of mountains ecologically, socially and spiritually, the UN declared 2002 the International Year of the Mountains: a worldwide celebration of mountain communities with a focus on mountain sustainable development. Amenity migrants have largely focused on the recreational and cultural aspects of mountains, that is, they have sought amenities and lifestyles that they believe will enhance their well being. The pursuit of these goals has led to increased human settlement in mountain locales. Some common and long-lasting damaging effects related to the development of mountain communities have resulted from the particular nature of the physical and climatic conditions of these locales, namely, fragility of soils and wetland ecosystems, and scarcity of resources (Dorward, 1990; Gill & Williams, 1994). Overall, greater

growth pressures have led to increased physical and cultural degradation of mountain ecosystems.

Within this context, namely a fragile environment, the development of mountain communities and in particular, recreation-based mountain resorts has become an increasingly contentious matter. There is now greater public awareness of potential damage to the environment and at the same time, ongoing expansion into mountain regions. In a western and increasingly global context, escalating valuation of the environment, greater societal pursuit of “lifestyles,” health and recreation-based living, growing commodification of nature and increasingly nostalgic societal perceptions of rural living (Jobes, 2000; Wilson, 1991) have resulted in mountain regions and communities being perceived by more and more people as possessing highly desirable amenity attributes. The impacts of this migratory phenomenon have been significant with environmental, economic and social consequences that have been viewed both positively and negatively.

The increased numbers of people in North America moving to the mountains and the subsequent significant impacts on these locales have drawn the attention of researchers interested in studying amenity migration and planning to manage its effects. Williams and Gill (2006) have identified a range of research questions pertaining to amenity migration that need attention, for example:

What are the key economic, social and environmental behaviour patterns of amenity migrants that destinations must consider when preparing to accommodate such stakeholders in their communities? (p.93)

What types of policies need to be established to ensure that their real estate development and leisure pursuits complement environmental priorities in the host destination? (p.93)

What types of covenants and design standards should be established to ensure that housing options created for amenity migrants complement and reinforce the destination’s sense of place? (p.94)

How can housing development policies for this affluent group (amenity migrants) be shaped to ensure the retention of affordable options for other less affluent residents? (p.94)

Williams and Gill concluded that more research is needed to enable communities to more effectively deal with amenity migration through the development of policies and programs that address employment, housing, community service and increasing socio-economic gaps between residents.

The concept of amenity migration itself poses some dilemmas. First, there is debate with respect to inclusion of second-home owners as amenity migrants. Secondly, amenity migration is a relatively new term and planners may be unfamiliar with its meaning. Third, the broad scope of the term may lead to inaccuracy with respect to the phenomena being considered. Hence the utility of the term in actual practice may be in question.

It is increasingly recognized by mountain resort communities that lack of effective planning may result in unfavourable outcomes for all interested parties. It is within this context that the present research has been developed.

1.2 PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to contribute to knowledge about amenity migration in mountain communities as well as the planning strategies and processes employed by these communities in managing social, environmental and economic effects associated with amenity migration and the tourism/migration interface. The study focuses on Whistler, BC and environs.

The goals of this study are to:

- Identify the relative awareness of amenity migration by selected key stakeholders in the RMOW and region;
- Provide a descriptive overview of the effects of amenity migration in the RMOW and region as identified by these stakeholders;

- Identify planning and management strategies which have been employed by the RMOW and region to address issues related to the phenomenon of amenity migration;
- Consider lessons learned from the Whistler experience and the implications for the planning profession.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Existing mountain communities as well as newly emerging mountain resort areas in North America face considerable pressures related to growth and development. A variety of issues present themselves ranging from environmental degradation, economic dependence on single industries such as tourism, socio-economic polarization of community residents, lack of affordability within communities and loss of community character. Levels of government are enormously challenged to address these issues effectively with consideration for multiple objectives that may often be in conflict. For example, how can a community increase economic growth through tourism development, real estate sales or other initiatives, while minimizing negative effects or impacts related to the natural or cultural environment?

The Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW), British Columbia, Canada is one of the most prominent four season mountain resort communities in the world. Since the mid-1960s, Whistler has experienced tremendous growth and has developed a reputation as a leader in addressing the issues related to this development, so much so that other mountain communities have sought to learn from Whistler. In 2010, Whistler in conjunction with the City of Vancouver will host the Winter Olympics, thereby facing additional challenges. Despite its reputation as a leader in planning related to growth and its success in winning “liveability” and planning awards, questions arise pertaining to the effects of growth on the physical, economic, cultural and social environment. Does a gap exist between the image of the RMOW as one of the world’s most liveable and better planned communities and the actual experience of those living and working in the RMOW and surrounding region (Mandel, 2005)? What planning measures have won acclaim? Are there others that warrant attention? What does “liveability” mean within the context of the RMOW? How has the RMOW and region addressed the phenomenon of

amenity migration in its planning? What can be learned from the experience of the RMOW and region in dealing with the effects of amenity migration? These questions underpin this research.

The thesis focuses on the RMOW and surrounding region through a case study approach of amenity migration as understood by selected key stakeholders such as politicians, planners, developers and First Nations individuals. The research question explores how adequately amenity migration is understood by these stakeholders and how does Whistler and the surrounding region manage the effects of amenity migration through planning strategies and practices.

The geographic region in this study encompassed an area within the Squamish - Lillooet Regional District and was specifically concentrated on the Whistler valley, the Pemberton Valley and the area south of Whistler along the Sea to Sky corridor to Squamish. The municipalities of Whistler, Pemberton, Squamish and the First Nations community of Mt. Currie all lie within the study area.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

While the findings from a case study are not generalizable to other communities or locales, nonetheless, amenity migration and the tourism/migration nexus is becoming an increasingly prominent global phenomenon (Price *et al.*, 1997; Hall & Williams, 2002). Because the RMOW is viewed as an exemplar of a successful resort community, this study is a contribution to the growing literature on amenity migration to mountain communities. It should be useful for existing mountain communities experiencing amenity migration and tourism development and for those communities considering tourism development initiatives. While this thesis focuses on amenity migration (and not on tourism development), the two are invariably linked.

Governing bodies at all levels may be interested in understanding how the RMOW operates as well as gaining a greater knowledge of amenity migration and useful strategies for ameliorating negative effects. Professionals involved in the planning,

design, management and delivery of a range of services in these communities should also find the study relevant. Planning practitioners with limited experience consulting in resort based communities or amenity rich rural environments may also find the study of interest. Developers and resort operators wishing to incorporate more social or environmentally sustainable practices may find the Whistler experience pertinent.

1.5 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The second chapter presents the research design and methodology. The third chapter is a literature review which explores the various bodies of knowledge which are relevant for examining amenity migration and its effects, namely literature that pertains to amenity migration, mountain community development, mountain resort development, and planning. The fourth chapter provides the reader who possesses little familiarity with the Whistler region a historical perspective on the region and the emergence of the RMOW as a four season resort community, an overview of community and regional characteristics as related to amenity migration, summaries of key planning initiatives and a review of Whistler specific literature. The findings of the research are detailed in the fifth chapter, followed by a discussion. The sixth chapter involves a summary, concluding thoughts, limitations and directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research design employed in this study as well as the various methodologies used in the research investigation.

2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is the specific plan for conducting a research study, including selecting the unit of analysis, assessing sources of information, and obtaining and analyzing the data (Persell, 1987, p.32, 586). Given the research question in this study, a design was needed that would permit an in-depth analysis of a social reality that is constantly changing (Bryman & Teevan, 2005).

A case study design is utilised in this study. Single case studies involve an in-depth and thorough analysis of a single unit. They focus on “how and why” research questions (Yin, 1994, p. 6) and often examine a community, organization or group in detail. A case study is conducted when the particular case is of interest based on its own merits or when the findings from one study could potentially be analytically generalized to others. In other words, when several case studies are conducted, the findings from each case may be compared and reveal patterns across cases (Gilgun, 1994).

The unit of analysis in this research is the RMOW and surrounding region. The focus of the investigation is on the effects of amenity migration as identified by key stakeholders within the RMOW and the surrounding region as well as the planning strategies and processes designed to address environmental, social and economic effects associated with amenity migration. In this study, there was an attempt to include individuals from a variety of groups, all of whom had shown a particular interest in the RMOW and region, but who represented diverse interests.

The RMOW and surrounding region was selected as a case study for its intrinsic interest as Whistler is known as a leader in addressing issues related to sustainability and sound resort community planning. This has been shown by the RMOW recently winning global

awards related to community liveability and the development of progressive community planning strategies (“Municipality wins”, 2005). The criteria for liveability did not, however, take into account the lack of affordable housing for many residents. The liveability award focused on what the community was doing to make the community as liveable as possible. The discrepancy between the image suggested by the award and the actual reality of people’s lived experience in the RMOW is intriguing and worthy of study.

This study may also be considered an instrumental case study (Stake, 2000) in that insight may be provided into effective planning strategies for other mountain resort communities in similar, earlier or contemplative stages of development. The researcher is, however, aware of limitations to generalizability in case study research, as each particular case inherently contains unique variables.

2.2 VALIDITY, REPLICABILITY, RELIABILITY

Issues relating to validity, replicability and reliability are important criteria in social research. They are discussed primarily in relation to quantitative strategies, but also pertain to qualitative approaches. Concepts of credibility and trustworthiness have been developed to address issues of validity in qualitative research (Robson, 2002). Credibility in qualitative research refers to the description and explanation of the research and the degree to which the explanation actually fits the description. Measures to cross-check research for credibility and trustworthiness have included member checking (research participants reviewing the research material) and the use of researcher audit trails (Janesick, 2000).

Additionally, there are strategies such as triangulation for dealing with threats to validity. In qualitative case studies, the process of triangulation (the use of multiple methods of inquiry) is often used to clarify meaning or verify the replicability of an observation or interpretation through the use of multiple perceptions (Stake, 2000). Stake acknowledges that because no observations or interpretations are ever perfectly repeatable, the process

of triangulation serves to clarify meaning as well as establish veracity of findings, through the identification of multiple ways in which a phenomenon is being perceived. The more systematic the process of using multiple methods of inquiry, the greater robustness of the evidence that is generated (Coates, 2004).

In addition to the use of multiple research methods for purposes of triangulation in this study, a reflective journal was maintained throughout the study as a form of audit trail.

2.3 METHODS

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative research crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matters, resulting in a “complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions surrounding the term”(p. 2). Qualitative research allows for an inductive approach to the research which facilitates a greater focus on the generation and development of theory rather than testing of theories themselves (Bryman & Teevan, 2005). The use of some quantitative data is, however, appropriate in this and many other qualitative studies.

The following research methods were utilised in this study:

1. Literature Review
2. Document Collection and Examination
3. Semi-structured Interviews
4. Site Visits

2.3.1. Literature Review

A literature review is a valuable preliminary undertaking for a researcher; it provides a detailed background source of information about the research problem and enables the researcher to become familiar with the subject, thus allowing for greater researcher credibility (Neuman, 2003). In addition, a literature review is helpful in providing useful insight and understanding of the topic to the researcher; it allows him or her to build on

the work of others and can be useful in initiating new areas of research that are important to the project but are unknown before initiation of the research (Neuman, 2003).

The main sources used to access information were:

- University of British Columbia electronic databases and online journals;
- World Wide Web Internet;
- University of British Columbia Library;
- City of Vancouver Public Library;
- University of Calgary Library;
- Newspapers, magazines and periodicals;
- Conference and Symposium proceedings;
- Attendance at the following conferences:
 1. **Sustainable Mountain Communities:** Environmental Sustainability for Mountain Areas Impacted by Tourism and Amenity Migration – June 14-18, 2003, Banff, AB;
 2. **Smithers Symposium on Mountain Community Development:** Planning for Tourism, Amenity Migration & Resorts – June 28-30, 2005, Smithers, BC;
 3. **Coastal Communities Network:** Communities at Risk: Planning for Our Future – March 11-12, 2005, Richmond, BC;
 4. **Planning for a Livable Pemberton Valley:** Ensuring Land Use Sustainability – Jan 14, 2006 – Pemberton, BC

Key word searches included, yet were not limited to the following:

Amenity Migration, Second-home ownership, Seasonal Homes, Rural Gentrification, Resort Community Development, Mountain Resort Development, Tourism Development, Sustainable Tourism Development, Mountain Communities, Rural Migration, Rural Growth Pressures, Contested Rural Space and various searches related directly to the Resort Municipality of Whistler and region.

2.3.2. Document Collection and Examination

Document collection and examination was conducted throughout all stages of the research study from the preliminary stages of the literature review to the final discussion and recommendations portion of the study. Documents ranged from independent consultant studies of the region to government produced planning documents. Documents pertained to both local and regional contexts. These were obtained from the Internet, libraries, municipalities within the region (RMOW, Pemberton), agencies, private consulting firms, and individuals wishing to share documents.

2.3.3 Semi-structured Interviews

A major component of the study entailed the use of semi-structured interviewing of key informants regarding their understanding of amenity migration, its associated effects and existing or potential strategies for their management. Robson (2002) describes semi-structured interviews as having predetermined questions. However, the questions and topics can be altered dependent on the particular interviewee. Such interviewing provides flexibility within qualitative designs. Occasionally, when an interviewee was not directly knowledgeable about the RMOW, but was an expert in his or her field, interviews were more unstructured. This allowed freedom for the conversation to develop, while still remaining related to the general area of interest and concern.

All interviews were conducted by the researcher following an initial request either by email or telephone. All interviewees gave permission and signed consent forms for interviews to be audio recorded on cassette. The duration of the interviews ranged from approximately 45 minutes to 1.5 hours. A majority of the interviews took place in the RMOW and surrounding regional district; however, some interviews were also conducted in Vancouver, BC, and Canmore, AB. Interviews were conducted in locations of convenience, including personal offices, coffee shops, restaurants and homes. In a few instances, when face to face interviews were not possible, telephone interviews were conducted and recorded.

Interviews began with general questions and then directed to more specific ones as the interview progressed. Gochros (1998) suggests that such funnelling techniques have been found to be useful in gaining honest and complete answers as well as being an effective way to gain rapport.

Interviewees will remain anonymous. However, their professional or occupational backgrounds are identified in Table 2.1. Respondents were chosen because they represented a range of vantage points with respect to Whistler and its environs. It would have been desirable to interview a larger sample including more primary residents, second-home owners and service sector employees. This was not possible because of time and other resource considerations. However, in addition to interviewees' occupational or professional interests in Whistler and the region, the majority were residents of the RMOW or neighbouring communities.

Table 2.1

Profile of Study Participants

<i>Interviewee Profile</i>	<i>Number</i>
Municipal Officials (Councillors etc.)	4
Academic Experts	2
Municipal Employees (Planners) RMOW & Regional District Positions	4
Key Industry Spokespeople	1
Landscape Architects, Designers, Resort Planning Consultants	1
First Nations Representatives	1
Other (eg. Mountain historians, Environmental Group representatives, RMOW Housing Authority, Authors, Real Estate Professionals)	3
<hr/>	
	<i>Total</i>
	16

The majority of interviews were conducted between June 2005 and March 2006. Despite multiple attempts to make contact with representatives of the Squamish First Nations, Hereditary Chiefs or Band Council members were unavailable to participate in this study. Interviews with members of the Lil'wat Nations were twice set up in February and March, but ultimately were conducted in April.

Throughout the interviews, the researcher strove to be aware of his perspectives and biases in order to not influence the participants' responses. This process of setting aside one's own knowledge about the phenomena is known as bracketing (Northern Arizona University, Nursing Department, n.d.). The intent was to create a comfortable interview situation in which interviewees felt free to share their thoughts openly, without fear of judgment. All interviewees gave permission for follow up through email or telephone when required.

Minimal notes were taken during the actual interviews. When listening to the recorded audio cassettes of interviews, the researcher made detailed notes on all the topics that were discussed. The content of each interview was then categorized for purposes of thematic coding. These themes pertaining to the nature of amenity migration as well as the planning strategies and techniques were then presented as findings.

2.3.4. Site Visits

Multiple site visits to the RMOW and surrounding region were conducted prior to and during the data collection stages of the study. Participation in a number of public meetings and community open houses in the RMOW was undertaken as a means to observe current community dialogue concerning issues such as the development of the Whistler Athletes Village.

Site visits were intended to familiarize the researcher in relation to a variety of characteristics concerning the RMOW and surrounding region, although the researcher believes that highly intimate knowledge of place or community develops when one has actually lived in or experienced the particular place for an extended period of time. The

site visits were, nonetheless, helpful in providing the researcher with an improved awareness of:

- Physical and spatial characteristics of the RMOW and surrounding region;
- Predominant land use patterns within the RMOW and region, community layout and design;
- Neighbourhood characteristics such as their function (i.e. commercial, residential) sense of place, character, vibrancy, extent of street-life/activity;
- Contrasting neighbourhood and community characteristics;
- Daily life patterns of residents (i.e. commute distances to essential services such as food shopping, extent of neighbourhood amenities such as parks and sidewalks);
- First hand observation of specific RMOW districts and neighbourhoods and/or regional areas or communities as recommended by interviewees during or after interviews.

2.4 STUDY DURATION

The duration of the study involved nearly a year of preparation while reviewing the extensive literature; nearly five months to set up and complete a majority of the interviews, followed by several months to complete the analysis and writing.

The next chapter provides a review of literature relevant to the amenity migration phenomenon.

CHAPTER 3: THE AMENITY MIGRATION PHENOMENON AND PLANNING

Migration is an energetic force that imposes itself on communities and society.

Goldscheider, 1971 cited in Jobes 2000, (p.20)

It's the other half of the American Dream: no sooner do people have a decent roof over their heads than they start looking around for another roof. Not instead of, mind you, but in addition to the one they are already committed to mending and patching. They want it in a warmer place or a cooler place: a quieter place or a livelier place. Mainly, they want it in a different place, a place where life is easier and more fun than it is at home.

Massey & Maxwell, 1993:29 cited in Timothy, 2004, (p. 133)

In order to achieve the goals of the research, namely to understand the effects of amenity migration as identified by key stakeholders in the RMOW and region as well as the implications for planning strategies and management, a broad spectrum of literature must be assessed. This chapter entails the examination of amenity migration and its effects through the lens of the following: amenity migration literature; second-home, tourism and migration research; western mountain resort development; and planning literature related to amenity migration. Some of these topics have well developed bodies of knowledge; hence, the review will focus on aspects of the topic that relate to the goals of the research.

3.1 MIGRATION: A SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTIC OF THE HUMAN CONDITION

Migration or the relocation of residential place has been an enduring theme since the beginnings of human existence (Fellman, Getis & Getis, 1997). After the Earth's most recent glacial retreat, some 11,000 years ago, the need for survival likely influenced the migratory behaviours and patterns of early human beings as population expansion, climate changes and the need for food imposed life or death conditions. Over time, migration has contributed to the evolution and dispersion of cultures and the complex blend of people and cultures found throughout the world today. In the modern era,

advances in technology, communications and transportation have contributed to accelerated human mobility and enhanced human capacity to adapt to major ecological changes (Peters & Larkin, 2002). The late 20th Century can be characterized as a period where massive population movements have occurred within national boundaries, between nations and across continents (Boyle, Halfacree & Robinson, 1998). These migratory movements have affected local, regional and national economic structures, land use patterns, population densities and distributions, cultural, linguistic and religious contexts and have often contributed to intense political debate and international tensions (Fellman *et al.*, 1997).

It is no wonder that the phenomenon of human migration, which affects so many aspects of social, environmental and economic reality, has long captured the interest of scholars who have attempted to understand the causal factors, various types and multitude of effects associated with the migration of human populations. Much of the study related to migration has occurred in the social sciences by economists, geographers, sociologists, demographers, psychologists and political scientists each utilising their respective field's theoretical underpinnings to generate theory and direct research. This has allowed for a host of migratory explanations to be considered.

3.1.1 Development of Amenity Migration Research

In the 20th Century North American context, the oldest and overwhelming majority of theories pertaining to population migration within the continent have relied on economic explanations (Lessinger, 1991). According to Jobes (2000), most economic theories have assumed that humans were rational beings who based their decisions to move on a rational and systematic process of evaluating the economic advantages and disadvantages of places, eventually selecting a place of residence which optimizes their material well-being. This idea of rational decision making in relation to economic advantages and disadvantages does not give attention to other variables such as age, marital status, gender and ethnicity that may influence migratory decisions. Jobes noted that these economically oriented theories have been the predominant and longstanding models in the social sciences and have thus gained considerable legitimacy. He argued, however, that the

assumptions of these theories often seemed so self-evident that they were rarely questioned and have often been asserted with little question.

Economic theories explaining population migration have lent themselves well to the general 20th Century North American trend of rural to urban migration. Peters & Larkin (2002) contended that industrialization stimulated the population growth of metropolitan areas primarily for economic reasons. Industries generally favoured urban locales due to lower business costs, improved access to service needs and proximity to local markets for goods. Increased job opportunities and higher wages in cities resulted from this urban industrial concentration; consequently people followed these opportunities.

This longstanding rural to urban migration trend began to reverse in the 1970s, effectively causing a North American rural renaissance (Boyle, Halfacree & Robinson, 1998; Kivell, 1993; Peters & Larkin, 2002). The urban to rural migration shift away from the cities caused many rural areas to record net increases in population growth, effectively ending decades of rural population decline and reversing the previous 150 year North American urbanization trend (Johnson & Beale, 1998 cited in Stewart, 2002). This reverse urban to rural migration tapered off in the 1980s, with predominant migration patterns shifting again toward larger metropolitan areas. Two migration patterns became evident in the 1990s: initially, nonmetropolitan areas grew more slowly than they did in the 1970s, but many were still attracting migrants; however, by the mid 1990s nonmetropolitan growth was again on the increase (Peters & Larkin). Canadian migratory patterns since the 1970s were less extreme than their American counterparts, but have also followed a similar trajectory.

The growth in population that occurred in nonmetropolitan American counties and the population decline in the metropolitan counties during the 1960s and 1970s was identified as counter-urbanization (Champion, 1989; Boyle, Halfacree & Robinson, 1998). Researchers interested in the study of migration theory began to re-evaluate existing theories and to develop new theories to explain these changing migration patterns (Halfacree & Boyle, 1998; Peters & Larkin, 2002). The theories were refined to

account for technological changes in communications, transportation and business that permitted individuals to live in traditionally less accessible areas.

One set of theories that were employed to explain the urban to rural migratory shift were place utility models (Stewart 2002). Economically oriented, place utility models assumed that each locale possessed different sets of amenities which ultimately contributed to that place's overall quality of life. Similar to wage-based migration models which assumed that migratory decisions were based on weighing the economic advantages and opportunities for material well-being in different locales, place utility models attached a utility (or monetary value) to locational amenities. It was assumed that these monetary amenity values were then simply factored into people's overall migration decisions. Place utility models predicted that wages could be lower in amenity rich locales because they were offset by the quality of life benefits of living in these environments. The saying "Half pay for a view of the bay" or taking a "Sun Tax" summarized the conceptual underpinnings of place utility models. However, Stewart argued that attaching monetary values to amenities could often be problematic because the same attached value of an amenity might not always be shared across all groups. Although many theories differed in their explanative accuracy, more and more theories were being considered.

Laurence A.G. Moss (Glorioso, 2000) was among the first to identify factors related to the development of the amenity migration construct; in 1985/86 he used the term, "amenity migration." In a paper presented at the Sustainable Mountain Communities Conference in Banff (2003), Moss identified how a strategic planning capacity study conducted for the Alberta government's Department of Trade and Economic Development led to the recognition of two important factors which contributed to the development of the amenity migration construct. The first factor identified a societal shift in the perception and emphasis on the use of natural resources. Less importance was being placed on natural resources for their extractive purposes, while increased importance was developing in relation to the preservation of natural resources for their intrinsic value. Areas with natural physical attributes such as forests, lakes, waterways

and mountain locales were increasingly being perceived as desirable places for the pursuit of leisure, recreation and living experiences.

Moss identified the second factor as the increasing value being placed on the culture of the people as an asset to place. In a follow up study of Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1986, Moss and his research team expected to find that tourism was largely responsible for the region's economic success. Instead, they found that the region's economic success was more attributable to the people who were moving to the bioregion (a geographic area defined by its natural parameters, rather than human administrative jurisdictions) (Moss, Tesitel, Zemek, Bartos, Kusova & Herman, 2000) to enjoy its environmental quality and cultural distinctiveness. Moss referred to the phenomenon as "amenity migration." The concept was further developed in subsequent case studies and other investigations around the world.

3.1.2 Definitions of Amenity Migration

While the concept of amenity migration appeared in the mid 1980s, the concept and study of amenity have a longer history. Coppack (1985) reviewed the nature of amenity, a term he called "one of the most useful, used and misconstrued terms in the geographical literature" (p.80). In his review, he provided a synopsis of how the term has been conceptualized in studies throughout the 20th Century. He developed a case for the definition of amenity from an economic perspective, in keeping with a number of arguments that have identified amenities as recreational commodities or valued goods. Based on dictionary definitions, Coppack identified the root and meaning of the word "amenity" as deriving from the word "pleasant."

Coppack (1985) noted a classic 1954 geographical study on the topic by Ullman; earlier studies by Younghusband in 1920 who considered the role of scenic beauty in geography; and Bright and Thomas' 1941 study which identified the "hedonistic" motivation for migration to California. As presented by Coppack, Ullman's 1954 definition of amenity was framed in terms of migration and was very concise albeit somewhat limited; "amenity" was defined as pleasant living conditions, with the concept linked to the

development of a leisure society. Ullman's study considered climate as the most significant regional amenity; however, he also acknowledged other amenities such as mountains and beaches, hunting and fishing, other sports and beautiful New England towns. The notion of selective amenity was also developed in Ullman's research, thereby furthering the idea that identification of an "amenity" was a highly subjective undertaking.

Coppack (1985) also discussed a 1960 study conducted by Perloff, Dunn, Lampard & Muth who presented an argument that non-economic motivations or rather, amenities, often stimulated population movement. However, this study did not explicitly define amenity. The relationship of amenity to planning, especially in the British tradition was also addressed: Coppack suggested the significance of amenity in the ideas behind Howard's Garden City movement in the early 1900s and in an American context, through the many city plans developed by Fredrick Law Olmsted. Coppack's extensive review demonstrates researchers' longstanding curiosity with what locational and cultural attributes are valued as amenities.

Development of the concept of amenity migration in North America by Moss and others represents a major advance in theory building. The ideas related to amenity migration are more encompassing. Studies pertaining to second-home ownership (Hall & Muller, 2004), contemporary rural migration (Jacob, 1997) and the tourism/migration nexus (Long, 2001; Whitson, 2001) have, however, often included factors and observations that have led toward an improved understanding of the phenomenon. Moss (2003) recognized that other constructs existed, but asserted that the amenity migration paradigm was superior in providing explanations for this type of migration as well as offering better strategic contexts and approaches for management. He also noted that the paradigm still needed refinement.

Although the amenity migration phenomenon can occur in variety of places, the majority of research has focused on amenity migration in mountain regions. This focus has been attributed to the growing number and rising rates of people moving into mountain regions

as both visitors and residents in North America, Western Europe and increasingly in less wealthy global nations (Price, Moss & Williams, 1997; Moss, 2003).

The conceptualization of amenity migration has remained relatively similar in the literature. Glorioso (2000), citing Moss' 1987 and 1994 publications, defined amenity migration as "the significant contemporary societal phenomenon of large numbers of people moving to places perceived as having superior natural environment and/or distinct culture - amenity attributes" (p.276).

Price *et al.* (1997) identified environmental resources in relation to the amenity migration phenomenon as "the perceived attractive natural, physical attributes of a place, including terrestrial and aquatic landscapes, climate, air and water quality and quantity, and biodiversity" (p.264). Cultural resources according to Price *et al.* were: "tangible and intangible manifestations of human groups or communities, considered culturally significant by either the originators or others who value the manifestations" (p.264). This specification of environmental and cultural attributes deepens our understanding of what attracts amenity migrants to locations.

3.1.3 Causes of Amenity Migration

Researchers commonly acknowledged that there were a variety of factors which might contribute to amenity migration. Beck's (1995) study on amenity migration to British Columbia's Okanagan Valley offered an excellent review of many key driving factors including "anti-urban" push and "pro-rural" pull factors.

Anti-urban push factors refer to attributes that some people dislike about urban settings, whereas pro-rural pull factors refer to attributes of rural settings which are perceived as desirable. Drawing on numerous sources, Beck identified four categories of attributes: natural/environmental, psychological/social, built environment and commercial. Some anti-urban push factors included: pollution; distant recreational opportunities; congestion; noise; high crime and higher densities. Pro-rural pull factors included: scenery; climate; air and water quality; open space/lower densities; perception of lower crime; sense of

community identity; local craft and recreational shopping opportunities; and proximity to recreational settings. It is likely an interaction of anti-urban push and pro-rural pull factors that accounts for the migration of people into more rural settings. However, with increased migration to these rural areas, there is a risk that the attributes that were the initial pro-rural pull factors may deteriorate and individuals may once again consider migration.

Glorioso (2000) stated that the amenity migration construct assumed that we were now in the post-industrial information age, and information and knowledge was replacing labour, land and capital (money) as the main producer of wealth (p.276). She cited Moss' (1994) six key factors that combined into two societal driving forces (SDF) which contributed to the occurrence of amenity migration:

SDF 1: Increasing Motivation for Amenity Migration

1. Higher valuing of the natural environment
2. Higher valuing of cultural differentiation, and
3. Higher valuing of leisure, learning and spirituality.

SDF 2: Greater Facilitation of Mobility

4. Increasing discretionary time,
5. Increasing discretionary wealth, and
6. Increasing access through improving and less expensive information and communications (IC) and transportation technology. (p.277)

In Moss' presentation at the Smithers Symposium on Mountain Community Development (2005), he remarked that the particular influence of the six contributing factors has varied since his initial articulation of them. Nonetheless, they remain fundamental and have been considered as such by other scholars.

Glorioso (2000) and Moss (2003) believed that discretionary time might have less influence than was initially assumed; increases in leisure time resulting from life in the information age have not been as great as expected. In fact, work week hours for many in North America have increased, with improved (IC) innovations allowing office life to permeate "after hours" into the domestic sphere. In the western American context, Moss

suggested that potential profit incentives and the “vogue image” of high-amenity locales replete with rich and powerful celebrity residents might also be an increasingly significant motivational factor influencing amenity migration. He also indicated that currently there appeared to be less emphasis on spirituality and solace seeking as a motivating factor for migration to mountain regions than previously indicated.

According to Price *et al.* (1997) the rising value which has been placed on the natural environment and places with differentiated culture has corresponded with the growing realization of their relative scarcity. This realization has caused many individuals, to attempt to improve their proximity to these resources, often through private ownership, resulting in increased commodification of the environment. Moss (2003) offered a poignant observation regarding the increased societal valuation of amenity rich locales: “An irony of increased environmental awareness in a free-market society is the commodification of the environment, so that demand for a piece of the action is chopping it up into one- to five-acre fenced lots” (p.22).

Chipeniuk (2004) referred to the relationship between tourism and amenity migration. Citing Stewart (2002), he stated that tourism may have a causative role in amenity migration, but that amenity migration might also occur independently. Stewart had suggested that amenity migration might occur through a series of stages whereby persons gained increasing familiarity and commitment to a place. This process is displayed in Figure 3.1. The model readily illustrates the relationship between tourism and amenity migration.

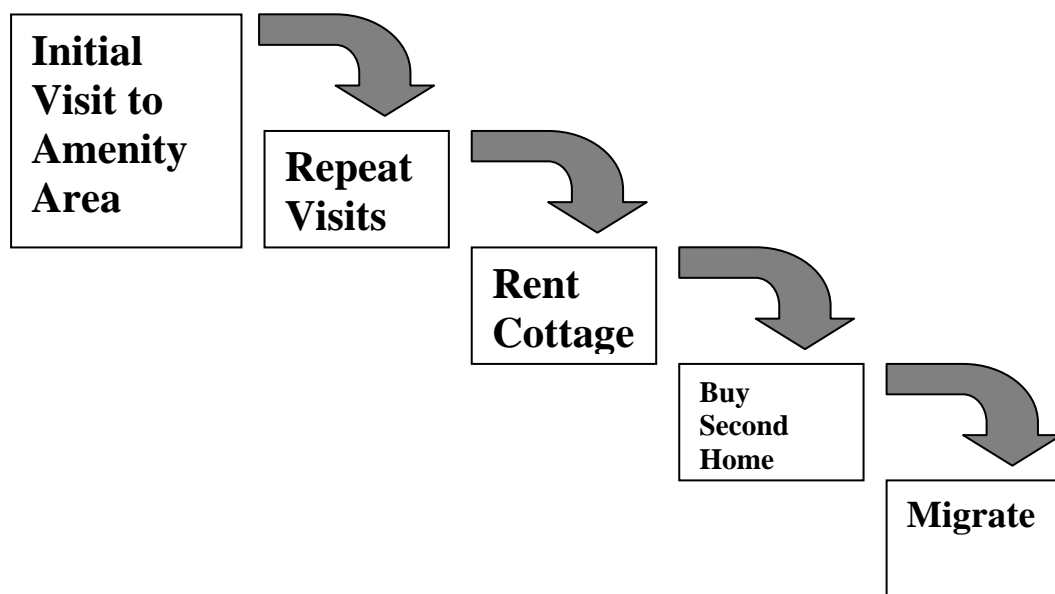


Figure 3.1: Potential Phases of Increased Familiarity and Migration Commitment.

Source: Reproduced from Stewart, S. I. (2002, p.373). *Amenity migration*. Paper presented at the Trends 2000: Shaping the Future -5th Outdoor Recreation & Tourism Trends Symposium, Lansing, MI.

3.1.4 Characteristics of Amenity Migrants

Price *et al.* (1997) and Moss (2003) described the characteristics of amenity migrants based on findings from their own and others' studies. In contrast to tourists traveling for amenities without the intention of remaining permanently to reside or gain employment, amenity migrants could be characterized as individuals who were settled in the destination where they resided on either a permanent or periodic basis, that is seasonally or intermittently. The amenity migrant's residence might be their primary residence, secondary or one of many. They often perceived themselves as residents of the high-amenity locale they have chosen. Permanent migrants tended to spend a majority of time in their chosen high-amenity community, while seasonal migrants often opted to live in the place for particular periods throughout the year such as during the ski or golf season. Intermittent residents tended to move among their residences more frequently.

Amenity migrants often originated from metropolitan areas and typically had higher formal education and greater discretionary wealth than the locals in places where they had chosen to settle (Price *et al.*, 1997; Moss, 2003). A significant proportion of amenity

migrants were not wealthy; many had accepted considerable income reductions in order to live in their place of choice. Some may have decided to earn incomes in their chosen locale. A significant proportion of these migrants continued to earn income from elsewhere in the form of investment returns and transfer payments. When working, they were often employed in positions connected to the information economy or involved in income ventures related to tourism or amenity migration.

In general, amenity migrants fell into either the category of resource consumers or conservers, with the former being more typical. Many amenity migrants tended to consume more indigenous and imported resources and goods, especially local foods, water, fuel and labour. These consumptive activities were often in excessive amounts, given the relative scarcity of such resources in most mountain regions. Finally, because amenity migrants often originated from metropolitan regions, they often maintained values and behavioural traits that were different from those characteristic of their new locales. According to longitudinal studies conducted by Jobes (2000), amenity migrants were also likely to re-locate and leave the locales to which they migrated if they perceived that these communities or regions no longer met their needs or fulfilled their expectations.

3.1.5 Effects of Amenity Migration

Price *et al.* (1997) acknowledged that migration driven by greater amenity seeking has occurred for centuries. Leisure settlements of the elites in early China and Greece, and the popularity of rural retirement cottages in Europe and North America during industrialization provided evidence of the long-term incidence of the trend. However, Price *et al.* differentiated between amenity seeking migratory activity in the past and that of the present, most notably, the increased impacts of amenity migration on host communities and regions. Changing motivations and the increasing ability to migrate have resulted in mountain regions in North America and worldwide becoming highly valued as destinations. Past amenity seeking migration tended to concentrate in areas with easier accessibility such as coastal and pastoral regions.

The effects of this increased trend of migration into the mountains had far reaching environmental, economic and social consequences (Stewart, 2002), all of which were interactive. The consequences might be viewed either positively or negatively depending on the interests of the viewer. In the following discussion, these impacts as identified by key authors who use the concept of amenity migration will be considered with primary attention given to the North American context. Other authors, although not using the concept of amenity migration are nonetheless dealing with the same phenomenon. They will be discussed later in Section 3.1.6 on second-home research and tourism and migration research.

A central effect of this migration focuses on land use change resulting from increased population growth and the associated impacts of these changes on environmental, economic and socio-cultural conditions in the setting. With an influx of amenity migrants to an area, a number of changes may occur which modify existing communities. Thus, Price *et al.* (1997) and Moss (1994, 2003) identified shifts in land use patterns to meet the housing and recreation needs of amenity migrants. These land use patterns in many cases were constructed to low density flatland suburban standards, which are not necessarily appropriate to mountain regions. Additional shifts in land use patterns included increased lot sizes and conversion of land uses at the periphery of traditional settlements; increases in the cost of land, often taking it out of local ownership, agricultural and watershed protection and in some cases, tourism uses; and increases in real estate prices which result in higher property taxes. Price *et al.* and Moss also noted that because amenity migrants were more settled in place than tourists with a considerable amount of their time spent in passive and active use of the environment, amenity migrants often critically increased the consumption of local water, land, energy and food. Stewart (2002) identified further environmental problems associated with the physical expansion of these communities including increases in the urban-wildland interface; increased ecological problems associated with “forest fragmentation;” development pressures on riparian areas and increasing infrastructure demands on communities which, if unmet, could further exacerbate environmental degradation.

Chipeniuk (2004) identified effects associated with amenity migration in his study regarding planning for amenity migration in Canada. He cited several authors (Booth, 2002; Power, 1996; Rudzitis & Johnson, 2000; Vias, 1999) who indicated that in the American “Mountain West,” economic analyses have demonstrated that amenity migration was now more significant than the formerly key resource extractive industries such as logging, mining, ranching and tourism.

In addition to land use changes which affected economic conditions of areas experiencing amenity migration, other economic transformations in locales have been attributed to the influx of amenity migrants. Moss (2003), Price *et al.* (1997) and Stewart (2002) also noted economic diversification, job creation and the infusion of increased capital into the local economy. However, Moss, and Price *et al.* stated that, although job creation does in fact occur for both new migrants and locals, the particular sectors and types of job opportunities that became available for amenity migrants and the existing local or indigenous populations were often dissimilar. Higher paying jobs in the knowledge, information and learning based sector were rarely occupied by local inhabitants who tended not to compete for these jobs because they usually did not have the same levels of experience or education as many of the amenity migrants. Growth in essential and non-essential services in communities experiencing amenity migration might also occur: art galleries, clothing boutiques, restaurants, personal services and construction were examples of this type of increased economic activity. New employment did result in growth in the service industries, but typically these jobs were at the lower end of the pay scale. The managerial positions in the service sector were often filled by the better-educated or wealthier new migrants.

Moss (2003), and Price *et al.* (1997) described a further economic impact: the greater perceived or actual economic activity stimulated by amenity migrants often resulted in an influx of “economic migrants” seeking to prosper from job opportunities in retail, services and construction within the locale. They were not necessarily interested in the amenities, but nonetheless, this growth in population placed additional strain on community services and mountain ecologies. Further, the excessive consumption patterns

of many amenity migrants resulted in rising prices for resources, commodities and services. These rising costs in addition to raising housing costs over time contributed to overall affordability issues. Higher prices forced locals and residents with lower salaries to pay higher prices for housing, and goods and services, to do without or alternatively, to eventually move away (Ryan, 1991).

Residents who decided to move away in search of more affordable places to live, often still wished to live within commuting distance of the original amenity rich community for employment purposes. In turn, they contributed to the growth of down-valley towns. Clifford's (2002) book entitled: *Downhill Slide: Why the corporate ski industry is bad for skiing, ski towns and the environment* offered a description of the growth of a number of these towns and the particular problems associated with their development, including increased regional transportation pressures, increased pollution and further environmental degradation related to human settlement in mountain environments. Clifford also identified cultural change and loss which can occur as a result of local and long-time residents leaving their communities.

Moss (2003) observed that these cultural changes are often complex. He believed that understanding of these impacts needed to be further developed as cultural changes have often been accepted as unchallengeable "progress." Price *et al.* (1997) acknowledged that cultural changes in mountain locales were difficult to attribute solely to amenity migration as cultural change might also be occurring as a result of modernization and post-industrialization. However, Price *et al.* indicated that the cosmopolitan nature of amenity migrants often placed significant pressure on local people to change their more traditional agrarian values and mountain folkways. These changes in work, leisure and family customs tended to occur through examples of new behaviours by amenity migrants and through direct demands for local socio-cultural patterns to align with the dominant ones that amenity migrants brought to these locales.

Impacts of amenity migration on indigenous communities in mountain locales were often even more severe as these groups generally have less economic and political influence

than newcomers. The newcomers, with their relative wealth and non-traditional lifestyles, could greatly influence the way of life in such regions. Amenity migrants in many cases have become involved in the protection of artefacts and historical sites or areas in their communities. However, this type of protection can also lead to the appropriation of culture by the dominant group.

Clifford (2002) and Rothman (1998) wrote extensively about the cultural transitions which have occurred in North American ski towns since their early beginnings. To summarize, they identified ski towns of the past as places where American counterculture was allowed to thrive. Mountain locales were periphery places where people could choose to live at the fringes of North American society and pursue a variety of their “alternative” interests. They argued that for the most part, this past “ski town culture” has been lost to homogeneous ski resort and real estate development. These settings have generally been geared toward affluent consumers, who for the most part, upheld traditional mainstream North American values and lifestyles.

The literature on the effects of amenity migration tends to focus on the negative consequences for the locale and the longer-term residents. There can, however, be benefits, usually economic and cultural. Some locales might have entirely disappeared had it not been for the development that has brought new people, new and revitalized business and innovative ideas. While there is much discussion of the effects of amenity migration in the literature, it is not easy to get a sense of the entirety of possible effects. No classification system of effects was found. Nor was there a model of how changes due to amenity migration interact with each other and/or give rise to related changes.

The literature does reveal that mountain communities face a number of challenges in maintaining healthy and viable environments for their residents and visitors. The protection of natural and cultural amenities of place is extremely important for locales that rely primarily on tourism for their economic base and in the process, attract various types of amenity migrants. The next section discusses literature that does not use the amenity migration construct, but nonetheless, addresses similar issues.

3.1.6 Second-home Research; Tourism and Migration Research

Second-home research has received attention in both North American and European contexts. However, there is a longer tradition of European study, especially in Scandinavian countries. Hall and Muller (2004) cited a 1938 study by Ljungdahl who reported on second-home ownership on the Stockholm archipelago prior to World War II. Second-home research frequently identified the importance of physical and cultural amenities as attracting influences. However, studies related to second-home ownership did not necessarily concentrate on mountain locales which have been the predominant foci of amenity migration research.

The following excerpt is from the introductory chapter of Hall and Muller's (2004) book on tourism, mobility and second-home ownership. It demonstrates the similarities of issues relating to amenity migration that are also considered in the study of second-home owners:

Second homes are an integral part of contemporary tourism and mobility. In many areas of the world, second homes are the destination of a substantial portion of domestic and international travelers, while the number of available bed nights in second homes often rivals or even exceeds that available in the formal accommodation sector. For many destinations, particularly in more peripheral areas, second homes are a major contributor to regional economies, while they also represent a significant heritage resource because of their use of vernacular architecture and the ongoing use of buildings that may have fallen into disrepair. At the level of the individual, second homes may also be important for concepts of identity and sense of place, particularly as they may represent a connection to family and/or childhood place affiliations. All this is not to say that second homes are universally welcomed. In some areas, second homes are seen as putting further pressure on existing housing stock and forcing up prices, thus making it harder for permanent residents to obtain housing. Similarly, where there are substantial seasonal variations in second home use, these may be perceived as exacerbating seasonal patterns in employment and economic demand, rather than assisting with regional development strategies. Finally, in some circumstances second home households may be seen as outsiders and even as invaders, which at times has created substantial resentment, even leading to destruction of second home property. The various dimensions of second home development point to both the complexity and significance of the subject. (p.3)

More recent studies (Hall & Williams, 2002) have also begun to focus on new relationships between tourism and migration. Development of research in this area has attempted to bridge gaps between the largely discrete research domains of tourism studies and migration. Hall & Williams noted the need to respond to newly emerging forms of mobility and circulation which did not fit easily into existing analytical paradigms of tourism or migration studies. They identified the extension of property rights across boundaries by second or vacation homes, changing work and leisure patterns, societal demographic changes and structural transformations in economies as some of the factors which have contributed to these new forms of mobility.

The influx of tourists in mountain or other resort locales generally contributes to the overall growth within an area. Often this influx is seasonal and the local community is challenged to respond with services and amenities without a sufficient economic base to sustain year round operations. During the off-season, there may be loss of employment for permanent residents as well as uncertainty about what the future will bring. Fragile environments may be subject to considerable damage should tourism develop beyond expectations. In order to survive financially, year-round tourism may be developed and promoted. If successful, the original character and sense of place that drew tourists originally may diminish or even disappear. Butler (1980) believed that tourist resorts moved through life-cycles involving various stages, progressing from initial exploration and involvement to development, then consolidation and eventual stagnation, with possible transformation into one of five possibilities: rejuvenation, reduced growth, stabilization, gradual or immediate decline. Each phase necessitated its own planning approaches.

Hainsworth (1996) identified some of the more common impacts associated with growth of mountain locales through tourism as follows.

3.1.6.1 Traffic

Hainsworth noted that increased traffic in mountain regions usually has significant negative impacts. Because of the narrow spatial confines of mountain valleys, traffic

congestion, pedestrian-vehicle conflicts and parking lot sprawl often result. Increased accommodation of the automobile typically requires the expansion of hard surfaces; these tend to be aesthetically unappealing and interrupt water flows with resultant severe erosion and flooding. Because of the frequency of temperature inversions in mountain valleys, trapped vehicle emissions and other atmospheric pollutants can result in significant human and environmental problems. Noise pollution from motor vehicles can disturb wildlife and affect the tranquility of the community. Further, growth and tourism development rely on heavy vehicle traffic for goods and services.

3.1.6.2 Housing

Limited space in mountain valleys and a desire for better views can result in expansion to higher elevations, with potentially negative consequences to the general attractiveness of the setting as well as increased stress on infrastructure services such as sewerage and power. Additionally, inappropriate housing design can contribute to diminished community character. Generally housing prices escalate in such settings and employees are often forced to poor or otherwise unsatisfactory arrangements. Hainsworth (1996) cited Williams and Gill (1994) as follows:

While the cost of providing employee housing acts as a disincentive to early investors, failure to do so has created serious problems in many communities once land values have increased (i.e. developers and local businesses have to pay disproportionately high rates to help rectify employee housing shortages). (p.218)

3.1.6.3 Natural Environment

Hainsworth (1996), Clifford (2002) and Dorward (1990) considered the many effects of tourism and growth on the natural environment. Usually mountain tourism developments require considerable energy and water; resources that are in short supply. Drawing on such resources can cause displacement and elimination of plants and wildlife. If sewage is not properly treated, it can pollute the rivers and streams, thereby injuring fish and wildlife. The sewage assimilation capacities of streams and rivers can also be severely affected in cases where water is drawn from the same sources for tourism uses such as

snow making and golf course irrigation. Polluted storm drainage may also occur when sheet draining from the built environment.

3.1.6.4 Social and Economic Impacts

There is a considerable literature related to social and economic impacts on mountain communities experiencing growth and tourism (Hainsworth, 1996). Much of the discussion is similar to that found in the amenity migration literature. Most of these communities are relatively isolated and often are ill-prepared to deal with an influx of either transient or more permanent visitors/residents. Local culture is often threatened by new ideas and behaviours. Some areas within the location, for example, the local grocery or park can become crowded with tourists, thereby negatively affecting residents' daily activities and causing a sense of loss of their own communities. Traditional economies may no longer be able to sustain the residents. Common property resources may become over-utilised for tourism and recreation purposes.

3.1.6.5 Fiscal Impacts

Generally mountain resort development entails substantial capital investments and operating requirements which are beyond the local community's budget. Outside investment often results in revenue generation that does not always benefit the host community (Pearce, 1995 as cited in Hudson, 2003). The negative impacts of tourism development may result in the use of public funding to remedy these problems. Other community services may suffer reduced funding (Hainsworth, 1996). There is no denying, however, that growth through tourism can also bring economic benefits in the form of increased sales of goods, business opportunities, jobs for residents and property tax benefits.

As stated earlier with respect to effects of amenity migration on mountain communities, the literature on second-home ownership and tourism/migration tends to highlight the negative impacts of growth in mountain communities. Indeed, there is considerable similarity in the effects of amenity migration and tourism on mountain communities. It

has been difficult for communities to assess the complex of effects, both short and long term, and to determine a direction for the community. Before examining how communities have planned for management of the effects of growth and in particular, amenity migration, there will be a consideration of the evolution of western mountain resort communities. Without a sense of how they developed, their early and later features, it would be difficult to consider how to proceed with planning efforts.

3.2 WESTERN MOUNTAIN RESORT COMMUNITIES

In this section, there will be a brief account of North American mountain resort development with particular reference to ski resorts as these communities are often the prime drawing cards for amenity migrants. There is also a review of more recent literature on designing and planning mountain resort communities, followed by an overview of real estate development perspectives and a critical perspective on corporate development of mountain resort communities.

3.2.1 Early Era of North American Mountain Development

According to Dorward (1990), a landscape architect with long time design expertise in mountain resorts, the earliest people to penetrate North America's wildest mountain regions were Native Americans, followed by European adventurers and artists in the nineteenth century. However, western settlers had a slightly different rationale for settlement in these locales that focused on town building and the exploitation of resources. Although the western mountain ranges of North America were initially valued for their rugged and wild nature, the mountain west became increasingly populated in the latter half of the nineteenth century as a result of the discovery of gold and silver in the mountains. Dorward noted that "Gold fever made town building in the mountains a raucous and haphazard process" (p.25). She stated that town building patterns in the mountains were similar to settlement patterns elsewhere in America, namely settlement was haphazard. There was a rigid street grid system applied in mining towns, but these development patterns did not adequately incorporate the topography. Dorward indicated that mining towns grew with no plan whatsoever allowing problems associated with

urbanization to develop. Mountain towns which evolved in this fashion continue to struggle with these issues.

In Europe the rise of skiing in the 1930s led to the development of a number of fully planned, self contained resorts in the Alps. Dorward (1990) identified the main design components of these resort villages as follows: “Centralized, self-contained services and support facilities; the segregation of cars from pedestrians and skiers; and the ability of skiers to reach their lodgings on skis” (p.33). In the North American context, little ski resort development occurred in the early postwar years, with the exception of Sun Valley, Idaho built by the Union Pacific Railroad in the 1930s. Rothman (1998) viewed skiing at Sun Valley as a catalyst for the emergence of a form of national popular culture. Until the late 1960s in North America, it had been more common to see the transformation of existing mining and ranching towns into ski resorts because of their locations and high elevations that permitted the integration of ski lifts into or adjacent to the existing town.

Dorward (1990) assessed the ambience and unique character of frontier mining-cum-resort towns as being unsurpassed. However, she also recognized the following difficulties in the adaptation of these towns from one era and use to becoming resort tourism focused: the incapacity of the old town centre to accommodate a larger population; increased crowds necessitating increased scale of buildings; difficulties of integrating new buildings with the old structures; improved visitor access requiring intrusive highways, parking lots and in some cases, airports; increased vehicular congestion and pedestrian/vehicular competition; parallel building facades leaving minimal open space; difficulties retrofitting old buildings for new uses; and lastly, problems integrating a sense of landscape into earlier forms that didn’t emphasize scenic and ecological values. Callaway (1988) identified a parallel evolution of resorts in Canada, including the involvement of railways such as the Canadian Pacific Railway in mountain resort development.

Cottle (1991) described resort design in the 1950s and 1960s as relatively unsophisticated and lacking understanding of construction in environmentally sensitive areas. He

identified two schools of thought regarding planning and building in the mountains; namely, the transplantation of traditional flat-land design or alternative lifestyles. The former assumed a principle of universality. That is, buildings did not change to reflect differences in climate, topography or culture. The idea was that buildings stood out as isolated objects set in strong natural landscapes. However, isolation was rarely achieved as other buildings were built on adjacent sites and in due course, the design of these buildings lost their original clarity. The result often was an assembly of buildings, neither isolated from each other, nor integrated in a fashion conducive to the development of a community. The alternative lifestyles approach emerged in the 1960s with architects who reflected different sites, regions and users. Thus, historical habitation patterns, indigenous buildings and regional design outlook gained some prominence as design determinants.

3.2.2 The Modern Ski Resort: 1970s and Beyond

A new era in ski resort development emerged in the 1970s (Callaway, 1988; Cottle, 1991; Dorward, 1990), largely in response to the difficulties Dorward identified in the first phase of North American mountain resort development as well as the increased growth and popularity of skiing and tourism. During this period, numerous ski resorts were developed throughout the mountain regions in the United States and to a lesser degree, in Canada (Clifford, 2002; Rothman, 1998).

The proliferation of mountain resort development in this era resulted in mountain resort design becoming an increasingly recognized field. Designers began to study successful resort environments and in particular, how to create attractive resort “villages.” Active and pleasant outdoor spaces, memorable imagery and a design framework for profitability were key elements incorporated into the design rhetoric of the period (Cottle, 1991). However, various problems influenced the nature of these developments: skyrocketing costs associated with resort development; lengthy delays for environmental and community approvals which often jeopardized new projects; and extensive capital required for development of a wide range of amenities to encourage year round tourist appeal. As a result, foreign investors and corporations became the key players in North American mountain resort development. They could provide the capital to endure long

approval processes and substantial investment in resort amenities. These new mountain resort developments were often comprehensively planned by a single private developer in order to capitalize on the growing leisure-seeking market trends of the period and to avoid redevelopment problems faced by developers (Dorward, 1990). Some of these resorts have been incorporated as towns, while many others remain owned and controlled by development organisations.

During this phase mountain resort development in North America became increasingly standardized with key components such as a ski hill and a major chain hotel, set within a village complex (Cottle, 1991). Essentially these designs or standard formulas involved master planning; Whistler Resort Village was identified as “the pre-eminent model of a planned mountain community in Canada” (Dorward, 1990). Such resorts have considerable merit, namely, a pedestrian oriented core, compact development and services; on the other hand, there is a tendency toward homogenization of character and setting. A prominent feature of these resorts is real estate development often in the form of vacation or second-homes (Callaway, 1988).

This historical perspective on western mountain resort development provides a useful background for understanding the current context of development in these locales as well as the significance of corporate involvement in the provision of amenities and expansion of real estate.

3.2.3 Real Estate Developers’ Perspectives

The above literature on ski resort development has identified perspectives of planners, designers and those concerned with the development of integrated resort communities. Real estate developers may share these perspectives, but give prominence to profit. An example of literature from the developer’s perspective is *Developing with Recreational Amenities* by Phillips (1986). He focused on opportunities and considerations developers should be aware of when developing real estate and resort oriented amenities such as marinas, golf courses and ski resorts. He commented as follows:

Skiing has been intertwined with real estate development ever since the first remote resorts opened, thus creating an instant market for lodging, accommodations, entertainment, and shopping. Many of today's major ski areas very nearly qualify as communities unto themselves, with all types of real estate products, from hotels and high density attached residential products to retail shops, single-family homes, lot sales, and so on. (p.116)

Phillips (1986) emphasized that in order to achieve successful development projects in the mountains, a careful analysis of the area's existing characteristics, location and market potential was crucial. Phillips' quotation about major ski areas "very nearly" qualifying as communities is also telling. What attributes are lacking in these developments that they are described or perceived as almost communities and not real communities unto themselves?

Intrawest, one of North America's most successful resort real estate developers and current majority owner/operator of Whistler-Blackcomb presented their strategy for success in a message to investors on their website:

Each gear of Intrawest's revenue clock produces increased guest visits, increased revenue per visit and higher real estate values at every turn. The design's elegance is that the gears work in sync, causing a compounding effect. The result: an animated resort destination that draws visitors from across North America and around the world.

1. We start with a resort and enhance the experience.
2. Then build an animated village so people stay longer.
3. All this attracts more visitors who come more often, spend more money and bring their friends.
4. More real estate is built and attractions are added, drawing yet more people.
5. More people, more often, leads to the expansion of year-round facilities, maximizing use of shops, hotels, convention facilities and restaurants.
6. As occupancy and room rates climb, so does demand for real estate, creating a surge in real estate sales.
7. All this results in a total resort experience which brings year-round destination visitors, generating financial critical mass which...
8. Leads to more resorts. Network synergy results in a compounding effect on the company's revenue streams and growth through time. (Intrawest Corporate website, 2006)

This strategy for success reveals how natural or built amenities like ski hills have become vehicles for real estate sales and how Whistler became the model for Intrawest's continued expansion from the early 1990s to the present. The emphasis is clearly on increasing the number of visitors who will spend great sums of money, which in turn will lead to expansion of the resort, and ultimately, profits will result in more resorts. There is no mention in this strategy of the range of impacts that might bring harm to the very environment and the amenities that have attracted people in the first place. The thirst for profit appears to override issues of sustainability in this strategy for success.

3.2.4 Critical Perspectives

The corporate approach to mountain ski resort development has come under increasing criticism from a variety of sources. Clifford (2002) argued that ski resorts are losing what made them special in the first place and that they will ultimately lose their appeal, quality of life and their economic success. He identified the big three ski-resort developers who were mostly established in the 1990s (American Skiing, Vail Resorts and Intrawest) as the primary culprits setting high-volume, high-end real estate sales in mountain towns as the industry standard. He acknowledged that this skiing and real estate relationship was not new, but had become vastly different in scope. The result was unsustainable development:

The Big Three have carried the Wall Street imperative of continuous growth, of rising returns every quarter, to towns and environments that are ill-prepared to withstand such pressure. (p.17)

Corporate involvement has also resulted in increased attention to branding for purposes of developing a particular market for destinations. Williams, Gill & Chura (2003) have analysed the nature of branding mountain destinations. They found that branding tends to de-emphasize certain aspects of the community in favour of more standardized features, thereby resulting in greater homogeneity of resorts. Such branding may downplay a locale's "sense of place," usually an important feature in the development of community's identity.

Dorward (2003) stated that the new corporate model of development was narrowly focused on a wealthy market segment with little allegiance to the local community. She criticized what she identified as the Vacation-Theme-Park Prototype, or “New Ski Village”. This type of design incorporated the most appealing aspects of a traditional village, but differed through the introduction of a pedestrian main street, increased building scales to 5 or 6 stories, the duplication of historical architectural styles for building facades and location at the base of ski lifts. Standardized visitor experiences became the norm, with few surprises as one might experience in real towns. Further the gentrification of mountain towns resulted in suburbanization of their surrounding valleys. She believed that the process of mountain commercialization did not incorporate problem solving related to the many common mountain resort community issues such as “affordable housing for a year round labour force, regional transportation, conservation of resources, the protection of environmental values and the creation of stable, demographically diverse mountain communities” (p.8).

Dorward (2003) also considered the role of modern ski resort designers who were expected to design urban-scale enclaves in essentially rural settings. Although she identified the importance of sound architecture, good siting and physical planning as essentials, she recognized that more was needed:

Designers cannot simply point to the core of their village plan and decree that it will become the heart of a community. *People*, as in *local residents* - not the designers - create the soul of a place. The best resorts, ultimately, will be the places where real people live and work and care about the place - not places where most of the houses are empty and the workers who maintain them must commute long distances from down-valley trailer parks. (p.9)

Dorward (2003) identified the need for a new development model and suggested that New Urbanism, with considerable adaptation, had potential. New Urbanism involves a variety of ways for making life in cities and suburbs more liveable. She noted that where it had been tried in mountain communities, there had only been minimal success as costs for housing remained high and design elements were not particularly congruent with the natural mountain environment or community context. Finally, she argued that mountain

resort communities should be full-fledged towns, within a regional setting, where residents could commit on a long term basis. Such communities would not be isolated single purpose resort villages, but real communities with a “diversity of economic resources, neighbourhoods, cultural opportunities, social services, and modes of circulation...civic symbols and functions which engender a sense of community” (p.10). She viewed the challenge as blending the principles of landscape ecology to the best tenets of urbanism without urbanizing the setting.

Ideally such communities would “retain their scenic beauty, small-town values, historic character, and sense of community, yet sustain a prosperous economy” (Lowe, McMahon & Propst, 1997, p.47) To achieve this ideal, Lowe *et al.* have, through a series of case studies of gateway communities, identified the following common practices as contributing to their success:

1. Develop a widely shared vision.
2. Create an inventory of local resources.
3. Build on local assets.
4. Minimize the need for regulations.
5. Meet the needs of both landowner and community.
6. Team up with public land managers.
7. Recognize the role of nongovernmental organizations.
8. Provide opportunities for leaders to step forward.
9. Pay attention to aesthetics. (p.48)

All of these activities are likely important in enabling mountain resort communities to achieve their goals, but prescriptions like good advice, do not necessarily bring about the desired end. Communities cannot simply adopt best practices. Much more is involved in a community identifying its vision and then moving toward that vision. Whether it is possible to achieve both development/growth goals and sustainability is another matter. The next section reviews the literature on the range of planning strategies and practices designed to address growth and in particular, the effects of amenity migration in mountain locales.

3.3 PLANNING FOR AMENITY MIGRATION

As the effects of amenity migration are varied and multiple, there are a number of strategies that have been proposed to plan for amenity migration and its associated effects. The following bodies of knowledge offer planning strategies or principles which potentially could be useful in planning more effectively for amenity migration and for the minimization of negative effects associated with the phenomenon. Literature on mountain sustainability planning, mountain resort planning and affordable housing in tourism-based communities, bioregionalism, growth management and amenity migration and tourism planning all contribute toward planning for effects associated with the phenomenon.

It should also be noted that many of the recommendations for planning for amenity migration remain prescriptive in nature as there have been minimal longitudinal studies of the phenomenon.

3.3.1 Planning for Sustainable Mountain Development

At the macro level of global mountain sustainability, researchers Ives, Messerli and Rhoades (1997) have identified seven prerequisites which should be in place prior to further development of mountain regions. They include: 1) the development of improved mountain perspectives including the voices of mountain people; 2) mountain reciprocity for resources, with direct payment for resources extracted from these regions and indirect payment for the stewardship of the land; 3) alleviation of mountain devastation due primarily to warfare identified as the most pressing obstacle to sustainable mountain development globally; 4) control of mountain hazards to lessen harm to mountain people; 5) improved and legitimate global mountain awareness, with a need for critical review of the research and the motivations of NGOs that have focused on mountains; 6) continuation of mountain research, including basic, applied and participatory research, with dissemination of results through various media and development of readily accessible databases; and 7) development of equitable mountain policy, both “grassroots-

focused” (complementing local knowledge and social capital) and “macro-focused,” (reflecting global trends, knowledge and outside resources).

Ives, Messerli and Rhoades argued that an agenda for sustainable mountain development would not receive UN endorsement until nations offered substantial support for these prerequisites. Such an agenda seems almost unrealistic. However, what is the alternative: piecemeal work toward one or more objectives? Clearly, major efforts politically are needed to achieve governmental commitment on all levels. The next section focuses on sets of strategies and techniques related to planning for amenity migration.

3.3.2 Amenity Migration: Strategies and Techniques

Researchers (Price, Moss & Williams, 1997; Williams & Gill 2006) argued that more overall information about amenity migration was required to develop the most suitable planning techniques. Price *et al.* (1997) suggested that an intensive longitudinal study of an area experiencing amenity migration over the course of five or six years, followed by less intensive study during the next decade would be particularly useful in providing insight into the effectiveness of various planning strategies. Strategic analysis and planning were deemed more favourable approaches than more common integrated and comprehensive approaches. They stressed the need for the integration of indigenous inhabitants in the core of these planning and management processes and concluded that:

In order to develop strategies to manipulate and develop tourism and amenity migration to their greatest potential for mountain communities and environments, it is vital to be able to differentiate between and compare tourists, economic migrants, and amenity migrants – and the different groups in these general categories – in terms of the nature and magnitude of their diverse impacts, both positive and negative. Equally, better understanding of the interactions between the two phenomena are needed. (p.274)

Such investment in longitudinal study of planning for amenity migration may seem costly, but without a better knowledge base, little will be achieved.

3.3.2.1 Bioregional Ecosystemic Approach (BRES)

In a study focused on tourism and amenity migration in the Sumava region in the Czech Republic, Moss, Tesitel, Zemek, Bartos, Kusova & Herman (2000) identified a bioregional ecosystemic approach to planning and management. This type of planning approach treated the ecosystem as a holistic entity: a symbiotic web connecting species and their activities within their spatial territory. A bioregional approach to planning assumed that careful consideration was taken to plan and act within a highly interdependent system. Moss *et al.* (2000) suggested three substantial advantages of a bioregional planning outlook: 1) a concern for ecological systems such as forest ecology and watershed management which require broad planning scope; 2) benefits of being able to plan for large scale regional networks such as roads, water and wastewater facilities, hydro-electric power and health care; and 3) the socio-cultural and political-economic benefits that can be realized through the development of complementary planning strategies for communities within the same bioregion.

In addition, Moss *et al.* (2000) identified several analytical planning techniques that have contributed significantly to BRES. These included: strategic analysis and planning (SAP); key stakeholder analysis (KSA); local sustainable development indicators (LSDI); remote sensing (RS); geographical information systems (GIS); and integrated endogenous regional development (IERD). The first three comprise a complementary set.

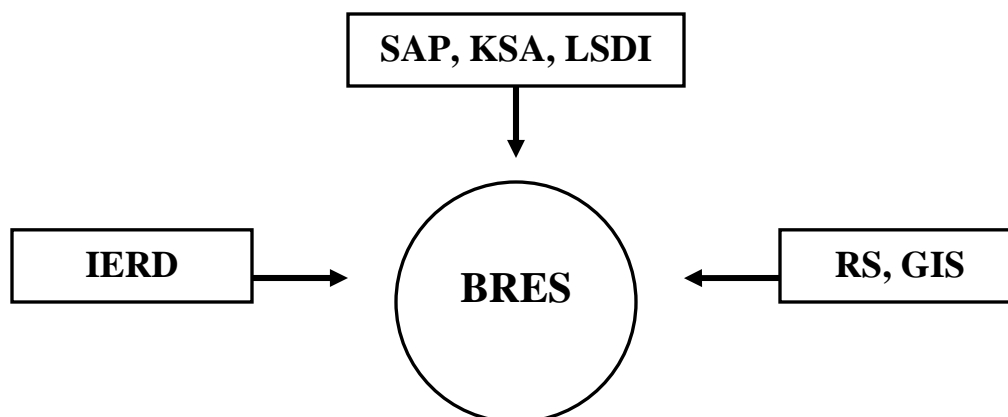


Figure 3.2 Components of an Enhanced BRES Planning Approach

Source: Reproduced from Moss *et al.*, (2000). *Tourism in Bioregional Context: Approaching Ecosystemic Practice in the Sumava, Czech Republic*. In P.M. Godde, M.F. Price & F.M. Zimmermann (Eds.), *Tourism and Development in Mountain Regions*. New York: Cabi.

The following table is based on the above authors' detailed descriptions of these planning techniques:

Table 3.1

Description of Strategic Planning Approaches Employed to Complement BRES

Planning Approach	Description
Strategic Analysis and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A framework for analysing and managing complex and highly uncertain situations. • A holistic approach to understand and identify behavioural patterns of open systems. • Long term, with a focus on manipulating key factors. Requires multi-skilled and oriented group participation of key stakeholders. • Focuses on external factors of the system which may affect long term outcomes so that management strategies can be integrated right from the initial planning stages. • External environment is studied for opportunities and threats to task achievement. • Approach is most appropriate where long term guided change is desired in a complex open system. This approach recognizes that while some external factors are quantifiable and predictable (i.e. some demographics), more typically they are imprecise, qualitative and to some degree unpredictable. • Approach lends well to multiple scenario analysis and assumes that in order to understand conditions and to inform important decisions a complex set of relationships between socio-cultural, economic, political, technological and physical factors are always at play. • The formulation of alternative scenarios is an effective planning tool given today's often unpredictable and rapidly changing times.
Key Stakeholder Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A component of strategic planning, KSA provides a means for stakeholder input and acts as a research tool for the analyst. • Offers opportunities for negotiations and bargaining among stakeholders. • Allows for an increased chance to explicitly address the politics of implementation during the plan formulation process. • Can be an effective mechanism to identify and understand key stakeholders while also acting as a means to democratize decision making and management. • This approach should not be used as a primary tool for negotiations or be the sole form of democratic participation in the planning process.
Local Sustainable Development Indicators Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of sustainability indicators to evaluate progress toward sustainability are for the most part in various stages of development. • What are "sustainable indicators" is highly subjective and therefore, indicators may vary widely. Generally these indicators pertain to

Sustainable Development Indicators cont'd	<p>environmental impacts such as pollution and resource extraction, the current and desired state of the environment and the response by human activity (i.e. political and societal decisions and policies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for such indicators likely grew as result of the 1987 Bruntland Commission Report's call for developing new ways to measure progress toward sustainable development. • These indicators can assist in analysis, strategy or plan formulation and monitoring and evaluation during and after implementation. • The use of these indicators can play a successful role in sustaining bioregional integrity.
Integrated Endogenous Regional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated endogenous regional development strengthens the internal analysis of strategic planning. • Goes beyond a single sectoral view of the use of landscape resources. • Views the area in question as a whole, attempts to involve local participation in the decision making process. • Aimed at developing the region based on its endogenous potential.
Remote Sensing, Geographical Information Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An information gathering tool capable of amassing regional scale data. • GIS can be used as a process modeling tool with potential for simulation modeling regarding spatial characteristics of socio-economic variables and their relationship to nature.

Moss (2003) argued that many of the planning strategies employed to manage amenity migration such as master planning, protective zoning, land trusts, impact fees and density bonuses are disjointed, partial, short-run and sub-optimizing. However, he speculated that the efficacy of these above planning strategies would improve if used in conjunction with a strategic planning approach. A strategic planning approach might also allow for other useful planning instruments to emerge such as user-friendly community ecological footprinting and locally derived sustainability indicators.

In addition to the implementation of bioregional planning approaches to plan successfully for amenity migration, Moss (2003) concluded that a shift in societal norms must take place where higher value was placed on the well-being of communities and their natural surroundings, and less emphasis on materialism. Moss acknowledged that some may

perceive these types of societal changes to be daunting or even utopian, but he suggested that these kind changes can be realized in the context of local and regional mountain communities.

In a panel discussion, Moss (2003) identified how he worked with the mountain town of Cesky Krumlov in the Czech Republic to develop profiles of different types of amenity migrants. Many of the amenity migrants had resource conservation and sustainability ethics. The town then promoted itself to the type of migrants that they felt would most positively align with the community's existing values via public announcements (often in print) declaring what kind of people would be preferred. Moss acknowledged that this described strategy could be perceived as very manipulative.

Moss (2003, p.29) also advocated long range planning. He urged communities to identify their goals and values and reach agreement on a vision for 20 or 25 years in the future. He believed that it was difficult to get agreement on the next 3 to 5 years; however, it was possible to take the twenty year vision and work back in time to the current situation.

Moss' proposed direction requires serious attention. It is a well considered approach that has been effectively implemented in situations experiencing amenity migration.

3.3.2.2 Local Amenity Migration Planning Capacity

Chipeniuk's 2004 study on planning for amenity migration in Canada focused on the current planning capacities of Interior British Columbian mountain communities. He stated that academic literature concerning amenity migration increasingly recommended that communities should attempt to take advantage of the amenity migration phenomenon as a rural development strategy (Fagan & Longino, 1993; Baden & Snow, 1997; Judson *et al.*, 1999; Nelson, 1999; as cited in Chipeniuk, 2004). In addition to the creation of new jobs and businesses, Power (1996) and Booth (2002), (both cited in Chipeniuk) recognized the ability of amenity migration to counteract current tendencies of population decline in rural resource based communities.

In the summer of 2003, Chipeniuk conducted what he called a rapid reconnaissance of the planning capacities of 21 Canadian mountain communities as well as obtaining questionnaire responses from planners in 5 “touchstone” resort communities, including Whistler, BC, Banff and Canmore, AB, Aspen, Colorado and Jackson Hole, Wyoming. He noted that some settlements like Aspen have used urban and regional planning strategies such as tax concessions to preserve working ranches, whereas many towns and villages only recently experiencing amenity migration, did not understand it well and have reacted passively.

The study omitted second-home owners as Chipeniuk stated that the effects of second-home owners from a planning perspective were drastically different from the effects of new permanent residents. This exclusion of second-home owners contrasts with other definitions of amenity migrants and makes comparison with other studies more difficult. Further, second-home owners do impact a community in their own fashion and presumably, planning bodies should be able to take into consideration all types of amenity migrants.

Chipeniuk (2004) found the following:

- The overwhelming majority of BC mountain communities indicated that they cannot or do not monitor the numbers of in-migrants to their communities, their reasons for migrating or their origins. Of the “touchstone” communities only Banff and Canmore, AB monitored migration. Reasons most often cited by planners and administrators for the lack of in-migration monitoring were insufficient resources to conduct this type of monitoring and the need for this information has until recently not been identified.
- Amenity migration has slowed population decline in some BC communities experiencing population losses. Other communities with stable or growing populations deem amenity migration to be a factor in their demographic sustainability.
- Communities with long or intense experience with the phenomenon of amenity migration become well aware of the negative effects whereas only one of the BC hinterland communities recognized problems (Jackson Hole, Canmore and Whistler referred to soaring housing prices, generally high cost of living,

conversion of agricultural land to residential purposes, and out-migration of employees).

- Planning to control amenity migration was rarely conducted if communities were unaware that the phenomenon was affecting them. Over half of the communities reported little or no change resulting from the phenomenon, several communities reported more modest change and only a few identified rapid and considerable changes. Informal interviews with planners revealed that many were unaware of the term. Many of the planners felt that these type of migrants arrived as unrelated individuals, not in the same fashion as groups of workers might. Appreciation of the economic impacts of amenity migrants was largely limited.
- Active planning to attract amenity migration was unevenly distributed throughout the BC communities. Half reported no direct measures, while the other half identified various planning measures. However, some respondents may have recognized these measures in hindsight. One question asked respondents if any of the communities' Official Community Plans referred to amenity migration. None of the plans referred directly to the phenomenon; however, some respondents did interpret oblique references to the term. Some respondents noted regret at missed opportunities and stated that the phenomenon should be addressed in the next round of planning. The amenity migration phenomenon was also largely unrepresented in community visioning practices in these communities. None of the communities had formal techniques to monitor the success or failure rates of planning strategies adopted to encourage or manage amenity migration.
- Most of the communities in the study were not involved in planning for amenity migration collaboratively with other planning bodies such as regional governments or First Nations. However, some do have varied and interesting strategies. The RMOW, for example, works in partnership with federal, provincial, and regional governments, First Nations and local interest groups to protect the environment. Many of the non-aboriginal BC communities reported little interaction with First Nations' governments, a lack which could be problematic in the future.
- A majority of administrators identified far fewer of their community's amenities or assets that would be desirable to amenity migrants than actually existed.
- Several of the respondents indicated that their communities would require additional funding to conduct amenity migration planning and that political support would also have to be available.
- With respect to capacity for planning, respondents for the smaller communities tended to differ from the planners from the more experienced communities. The former proposed broad or conventional tactics; the latter were able to readily offer advice to planners and administrators regarding how to plan for amenity migration. Themes in the advice included having a strong community vision,

become familiar with the nature of amenity migration and devising ways for the amenity migrant sector to pay for the cost of the impacts.

Chipeniuk (2004) concluded that planners and administrators were well prepared in some respects and ill prepared in others. In particular, they had little awareness of how significant a demographic and economic force, amenity migration is becoming and they lacked capacity to track it. In hinterland BC, there was a lack of government mobilization at regional and provincial levels. He stated:

Mechanisms that might serve as tools in an overall municipal strategy to address amenity migration, for instance growth management or affordable housing bylaws, are inadequate unless they function in the context of a complete set of amenity migration strategies, including especially the means to measure rates and economic consequences of amenity migration on an annual basis. (p.334)

Ultimately, Chipeniuk (2004) recommended that the provincial government should be funding, facilitating and planning for amenity migration. However, he noted that British Columbian governments have shown minimal interest in supporting this initiative. Chipeniuk speculated that the lack of provincial interest may be attributed to two factors: amenity migration in British Columbia primarily has rearranged people within the province creating no net benefits for the province as a whole; and likely there was simply an insufficiency of planning resources in the provincial civil service.

Chipeniuk's study is very pertinent for identifying what needs to be done in terms of raising awareness of amenity migration. It would, however, have been useful to inquire about planning efforts related to second-home ownership.

The following section reviews growth management approaches which have focused on minimizing negative impacts associated with amenity migration.

3.3.2.3 Growth Management Approaches

Gill & Williams (1994) and Hainsworth (1996) provided an overview of growth management approaches in relation to community development and sustainable tourism

planning in rural communities. Hainsworth noted that the term “growth management” began to appear in planning literature in the mid 1970s. Originally, the term was often associated with rigid growth control measures such as “no-growth” and “slow growth.” However, growth management approaches are not necessarily pro or anti-growth. In essence, growth management strategies seek to guide growth and development in a manner that minimizes negative environmental, social and fiscal impacts while not necessarily having to reduce the overall amounts or rates of growth - a systematic impact management strategy (Gill & Williams). Hainsworth stated that a foundational component of growth management is the “commitment to plan carefully for growth so as to achieve a responsible balance between the impacts of development and the interests of the local community and natural environment.” (p.33)

Growth management is a comprehensive approach to planning employing a variety of strategies to manage growth. This approach is often more successful than the implementation of single strategies. There may, however, be unintended consequences of any growth management strategy, some of these may be negative.

Citing Beatly, Brower & Brower (1988), Hainsworth (1996) stated that a growth management program was a system with a statement of community goals and mission, comprehensive and more refined plans, and the strategies and techniques that were utilised to realise community goals. Growth management programs could not provide generic solutions and the most successful programs were those which were congruent with the community’s political, physical, social, historical and economic needs.

Through an analysis of the processes for developing, implementing and managing growth management programs, Hainsworth (1996) identified many of the common steps in these processes. They included: 1) determination of community goals, objectives and policies, in essence, the community vision; 2) analysis of the community’s existing growth policies: current tax systems, zoning bylaws and land use regulations etc.; 3) identification of likely impacts from significant development initiatives; both positive and negative impacts should be considered; 4) identification of potential growth management

tools and techniques: development of a list of all the possible local, regional, provincial and federal tools that can be used to influence development impacts; 5) adaptation of the particular tools and techniques which are most practical for local use; 6) synthesis of selected tools into a growth management system; and lastly, 7) continued monitoring, evaluation and refinement to the system to measure and improve effectiveness. However, without awareness of growth pressures, political will and sufficient resources, a community is unlikely to embark on this extensive planning strategy.

Gill & Williams (1994) provided a useful framework for understanding the various factors that must be taken into account when implementing growth management strategies in mountain communities.

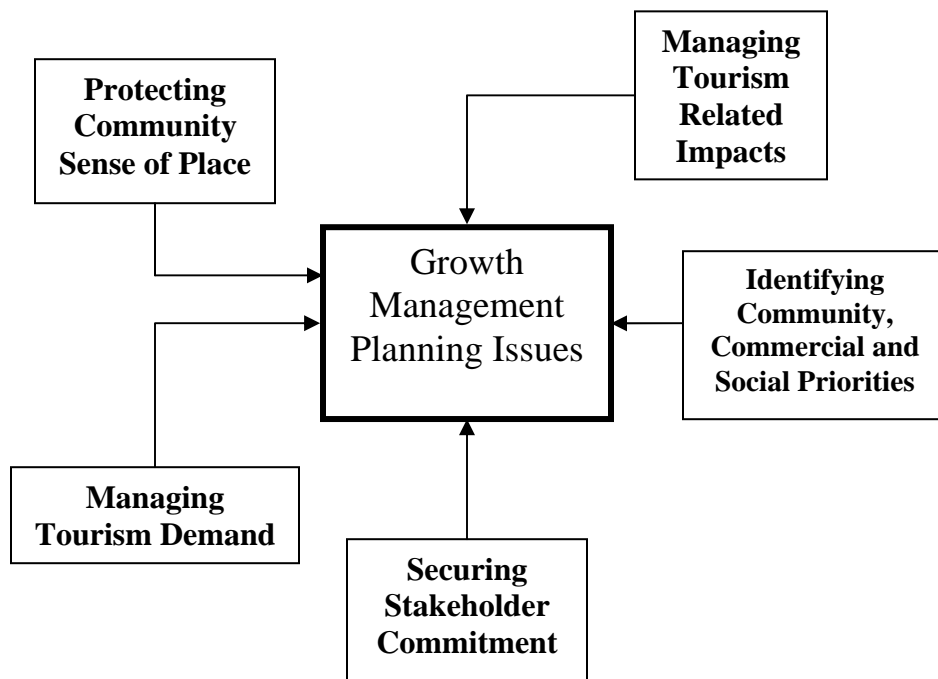


Figure 3.3 Considerations for Mountain Resort Community Growth Management Strategies. **Source:** Reproduced from A. Gill & P. Williams (1994, 219) Managing growth in mountain tourism communities. *Tourism Management*, 15(3), 212 -220.

This model may also be used in regional initiatives. Gill & Williams (1994) identified the need to consider not only the community in question, but also the natural, cultural and scenic resources in the surrounding region. They noted down-valley effects of resort tourism in less well regulated jurisdictions. The importance of including higher levels of

government was affirmed; otherwise problems related to growth would simply compound.

In a study of amenity migration to the Okanagan Valley, BC and the implications for strategic planning, Beck (1995) provided an overview of potential growth management and regulatory techniques with particular attention paid to techniques aimed at limiting urban or rural sprawl in areas with valuable agricultural land and natural amenity. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive mix of local, regional or federal techniques in order to avoid reliance on a single policy tool. Citing Landis (1992, p.490), Beck differentiated between growth management techniques and growth controls; the latter restricts growth to below what would occur in an unconstrained real estate market by limiting the number of residential and/or commercial or industrial building permits on a local or regional basis.

Growth controls can be problematic and at times politically contentious with generally strong support by local residents and lack of acceptance by developers. Without regional adoption of growth controls, there is potential for municipalities and areas adjacent to the municipality that has adopted growth controls to be subject to spillover costs of their growth control measures. These may include rising housing costs and a reduction in the amount of affordable housing.

Beck (1995) presented several categories of growth management techniques. Brief descriptions based on his review follow. The section concludes with a description of two growth control techniques, which may be considered as part of an overall growth management strategy.

Urban Containment and Compact Development - Techniques which have been employed to reduce urban sprawl include: increasing densities, mixed nodal development, cluster development, directing and staging growth, urban growth boundaries, development impact fees, agricultural preservation/zoning and the transfer and purchase of development rights.

a) *Increased densities and mixed uses* - Increasing densities can be achieved through the reduction in lot sizes, the addition of rear units or secondary suites, allowing residential above commercial development and rezoning of single family neighbourhood lots to allow for multiple family dwelling units.

b) *Nodal development* - More commonly referred to today as “complete communities.” These types of communities can occur through the intensification of uses and through improved provision of essential services within neighbourhoods. Live/work developments and better balances of jobs to housing can work to decrease resident day-to-day dependency on the automobile.

c) *Compact design* - Use of design techniques to build appealing single family homes on smaller lot sizes and to reduce the amount of road and driveway space required to service development. This type of “neo-traditional” design generally allows for narrower streets, greater transportation connectivity (grid style street networks), street and alley parking and improved opportunities for sidewalks and tree-lined streets.

d) *Compact infilling* - In addition to infilling and redevelopment of older residential lots, large commercial parking lots and strip malls may also be utilised as areas where infilling can occur.

e) *Pedestrian-oriented design* - The use of design regulations to include maximum setbacks, narrower streets and development of parking structures to the rear of buildings. These measures can help to ameliorate and enliven the quality of the pedestrian realm, thus encouraging more walking and improved chances for impromptu social interaction.

Directed and Staged Growth - Directed and staged growth initiatives that follow are often used to guide growth in a manner that optimizes the use of existing infrastructure while minimizing detrimental environmental impacts and costs for additional infrastructure provision.

a) *Urban growth boundaries* - This technique has been utilised to identify an area around the existing urbanized area of a community in which development will likely occur, often within the next 20 years. Urban service boundaries have also been employed to delineate areas where services will be provided, thus limiting development beyond the boundary to non-urban uses. Natural or built features may be used as boundaries.

Urban growth boundaries should be utilised in conjunction with other growth management strategies to ensure that density goals, for instance, are higher within the urban growth boundaries than outside the boundary. Further, if boundaries are particularly generous, attention must be paid to ensure that sprawl doesn't occur within the boundary. Growth boundaries can be helpful in creating natural buffers between continuous forms of urban development, thus contributing to improved community differentiation or "sense of place." These boundaries, however, are often non-permanent.

b) *Impact fees* - Development cost charges are separate from the tax base system and are intended to pass on the costs of development to newcomers. Revenues from impact fees can be utilised for a variety of purposes including funding services and infrastructure or in the acquisition of parkland; natural spaces; and recreational areas.

c) *Concurrency requirements* - These requirements specify that development permits are not issued unless adequate service and infrastructure are already in place or will be by the completion of the development project in question. Growth should be encouraged in targeted areas in order to maximize infrastructure potential prior to allowing development in emergent areas.

d) *Regional tax sharing* - Regional tax sharing can work positively to avoid competition for tax base among regional communities. A proportion of the growth in property taxes in a region is pooled and then redistributed to those local areas with lower than average per-capita assessed property tax values. Benefits can include lowered competition among communities to attract commercial developments (commercial tax bases are generally considerably higher than residential values). Further, tax sharing may allow development

to occur more evenly throughout a region and less pressure for continued expansion is imposed on areas that are already experiencing development saturation. Disproportionate positive economic growth in one community can be applied to benefit the entire region. Often when one community prospers economically, negative regional consequences occur such as increased traffic congestion. A tax base sharing system can be utilised to compensate negatively affected regional areas.

Natural and Open Space Preservation - Mechanisms such as public and private land trusts (land banking), the purchase of easements, clustering development, agricultural zoning and districting, property tax breaks and transfer or purchase of development rights can be used by all interested government bodies, non-profit organizations or citizens to conserve or purchase open space, namely rural lands, natural areas and agricultural lands.

a) *Land trusts* - Typically land trusts involve the purchase of natural and open space lands for the sake of preserving in perpetuity the aesthetic, ecological, agricultural, and recreational or public access aspects of the land. Historic natural or built areas or districts can be protected by heritage land trusts. Land trusts are often initiated by non-profit organizations and offer more secure and permanent land protection than zoning or development regulations that are subject to political will. Government funded initiatives, that is, public land trusts preserve potentially valuable land for future development of affordable housing or other uses. This land may be leased to users who do not have to pay inflated rates for use of this land.

b) *Cluster zoning* - This approach can be employed to concentrate residential and commercial development into the least agriculturally productive or environmentally sensitive portions of land parcels. This allows for the remaining undeveloped areas to remain in productive use or in its natural state. Incentives to landowners/developers may include: the provision of density bonuses, purchase of development rights or the transfer of development rights. Clustered zoning development can contribute to a more rural character of development.

Agricultural Preservation - A variety of techniques at the federal, provincial and local government levels can be employed to protect agricultural lands from development. Federal or provincial strategies often include mandatory zoning laws to create agricultural zones and right-to-farm policy or regulation. Locally initiated agricultural preservation techniques can include density bonussing, voluntary agricultural districting and transfer of development rights. More indirect financial incentives can include differential tax assessments or taxation deferral until urban uses on the land are actualised.

a) *Agricultural zoning and districting* - Nonexclusive and exclusive zoning are the two most common practices. Nonexclusive zoning is also referred to as minimum lot or large-lot zoning, generally setting minimum lot sizes for land within 1 and 160 acres (0.4. to 64 ha). Exclusive zoning requires farmland to be utilised specifically for agricultural production and may be performance based. Although costly, when exclusive zoning is overseen at the provincial level, conflicts are minimized as local interests do not interfere with the designation of agricultural land. Further, from a local view, provincial control over this type of zoning may be less politically acceptable. To date, British Columbia's agricultural zoning system is not strictly exclusive and some limited non-agricultural uses can be permitted through an application for special exemption.

b) *Agricultural districting* - This practice involves the voluntary designation of agricultural areas by farmers who agree to maintain exclusive agricultural use of their land in return for government benefits. Benefits can include: protection against annexation; preferential tax assessment; protection against nuisance suits (right-to-farm); and limitation of urban services which could impose growth pressures.

c) *Performance - based zoning (Exclusive farm use)* - This measure requires that landowners restrict their land use activities to agricultural or related activities in order to comply with zoning regulations. A minimum gross income from agriculture is required in order to qualify for the same benefits as landowners in agricultural districts. Stringent

development conditions are also often placed on the development of non-farm buildings, thereby reducing the amount of land taken out of productive farm use.

d) *Minimum lot sizes* - The creation of minimum lot sizes can be utilised to offset urbanisation and speculation. The determined minimum lot size which effectively begins to act as disincentive to speculation will vary based on current housing costs, the state of the economy and the availability of alternate developable land.

e) *Transfer and purchase of development rights and restrictive covenants* - These techniques are employed to remove the rights of landowners to develop their land for urban uses. Transfer of development rights effectively allows the transfer of the potential development rights on one parcel of land to another more suitable designated target area. Agricultural, rural, open space, forested lands and lots with historic value are typically chosen for transference. The transferred area remains undeveloped in perpetuity. Developers can then purchase the development capacity from the designated “sending” area for use in the “receiving” area. Precaution should be taken to ensure that the development capacity of a “receiving” area can accommodate increased levels of development. Some problems that have been identified with the transfer of development rights include landowner participation. Those most likely to participate are landowners with farmland the most distant from urban areas; landowners in closer proximity to urban areas are least likely to participate as they anticipate the potential benefits from development (Nelson 1992, p. 470 cited in Beck, 1995).

The purchase of development rights are subsidized by taxpayers who pay for bonds which are utilised by the local or provincial government to purchase development rights. Purchased development rights are not transferable to other targeted development areas. Because speculators can purchase farmland in areas where they foresee potential urban development and later sell their development rights for a premium once development pressures are at their highest, the taxpayer pays for both the infrastructure that created the development value and for the resulting development value. The economic feasibility of this type of initiative may also come under question as the cost of purchasing

development rights can often exceed 80% of the total value of the property (MacKenzie, Derr & Morris 1991, p.62 cited in Beck 1995).

f) *Differential tax assessment* - This type of tax assessment refers to paying taxes on farmland that is assessed as land for agricultural purposes, not urban land at market value. Sometimes a formula is involved for determining taxes to prevent owners of land for agricultural use from paying more than their fair share of costs for urban infrastructure.

g) *Right-to-farm regulations* - These policies protect farmers from “nuisance” suits which are often brought about by exurban residents who become upset with various farming practices such as noise from machinery, odours and the use of pesticides. These regulations ensure that farmers have the right to continue engaging in agricultural activities as long as they conform to common farming practices. In BC, the Right-to-Farm Act was adopted in 1995.

View Corridors and Aesthetic Considerations - In addition to regulations imposed by traditional zoning measures, overlay zoning and special ordinances can be utilised to specify additional restrictions or standards on development. These additional zoning strategies can be helpful in view corridor and street character preservation. Often design oriented, overlay zoning and special ordinances can regulate building design and setbacks, yard landscaping and sign specification.

Growth Controls - The following two techniques are used to control and set actual limits on growth rather than manage or guide growth.

a) *Growth moratoria and reduction* - Through the adoption of policy, communities can limit or reduce the amount of building permits issued. Limiting further development can subsequently limit population growth. In some cases, municipalities have even developed restrictions on population growth itself. There are a number of methods which can be utilised to grant building permits annually when an upper limit on development has been set. These include: allocation on a first come first serve basis; allocation through a

lottery; *pro-rata* where developers receive a portion of the total allocation; and lastly through a point system. Point systems allocate points to applications based on their merits. Although evaluating such building permits is more time consuming and costly, a point system can encourage optimal development results. For example, points may be allocated for quality of design, compatibility of development within existing neighbourhoods, preferred densities or even affordable housing.

b) *Job Creation* - Job creation is recognized as a factor in population change. Therefore limiting job creation may control population growth. It is important to integrate economic development policy with planning and growth management strategies.

Although growth management strategies address various impacts related to amenity migration, they may even contribute to issues such as the lack of affordable housing in mountain communities. The provision of adequate affordable housing for residents often becomes a focal point for planning.

3.3.3 Planning for Affordable Housing

Williams & Gill (2006) identified displacement impacts related to amenity migrants as more pervasive than those for tourism, amenity migrants being affluent and potentially permanent in a host destination. They stated that housing was the most problematic displacement effect of amenity migration. Therefore, planning was essential in order to provide affordable housing, in particular, to employees as well as retaining a diversity of housing types for all residents. The need for more research on this issue is made clear through a series of questions pertaining to planning:

What policy, planning and programming measures can be taken to address the housing displacement issue associated with amenity migrations? How effective and efficient have such initiatives been in addressing affordable housing issues created via amenity migration? To what extent do long term destination stakeholders and amenity migrants support the use of higher density, compact infill, or innovative housing design and construction programmes to alleviate affordable housing issues? (Williams & Gill, p. 96)

In *Living and Working in Paradise*, Hettinger (2005) provided a very comprehensive assessment of housing issues in amenity rich tourism destination communities including Aspen, Colorado and Whistler, BC. His subtitle summarized his two foci: *Why Housing is Too Expensive and What Communities Can Do About It*. He identified topographical constraints, growth management and land-use and zoning regulations and second-home demand as externalities which contribute toward unaffordable housing costs. This could result in displaced local residents (market failure) and community crisis. However, recognition of potential market failure may lead to proactive community planning for affordable housing.

Hettinger (2005) provided eight critical success factors that were required for successful housing interventions: 1) political will; 2) community will; 3) housing vision; 4) housing plan; 5) political and community buy-in; 6) funding; 7) land; and 8) organizational capacity. He also specified policy implications that must be recognized by those engaged in planning for affordable housing.

Table 3.2

Policy Implications in Planning for Affordable Housing in Tourism Destination Communities

Policy Implications

1. Recognize the conditions of the market failure.
2. Be proactive.
3. Monitor housing affordability.
4. Monitor second-home growth.
5. Remain focused on interventions over market cycles.
6. Leverage local resources for funding.
7. Use a mix of public and private development.
8. Provide a mix of ownership and rental units.
9. Learn from other communities.
10. Examine each community as a unique entity.
11. Recognize that interventions are not static and require constant modification and renewal as market conditions change.

Source: Reproduced from Hettinger, W. S. (2005, p.79). *Living and working in paradise: why housing is too expensive and what communities can do about it*. Windham, CT: Thames River.

A major benefit of Hettinger's work is his detailed explication of processes of growth, their impacts and techniques for intervention. For example, he portrays the process of imposing land use and zoning regulations in Figure 3.4, and growth management regulations in Figure 3.5:

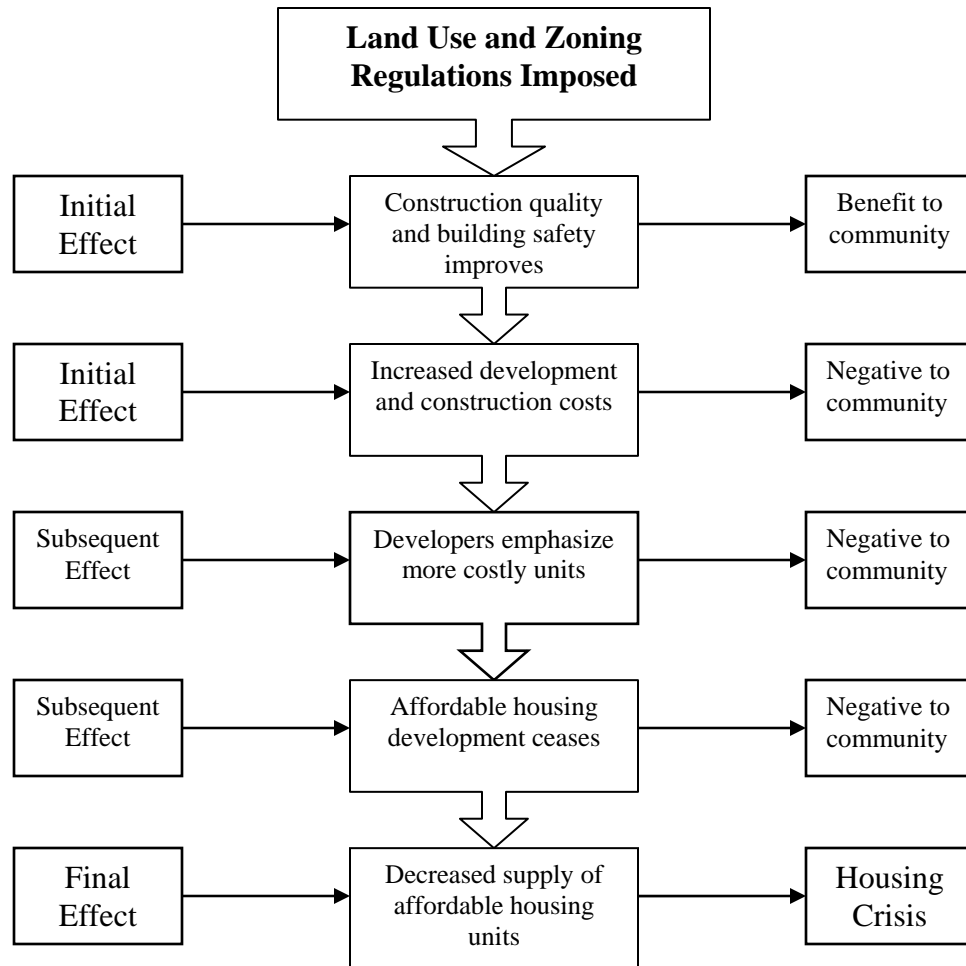


Figure 3.4: Housing Impacts Associated with Land Use and Zoning Regulations Applied to Amenity Rich Tourism Destination Communities. **Source:** Reproduced from Hettinger, W. S. (2005, p.102). *Living and working in paradise: why housing is too expensive and what communities can do about it*. Windham, CT: Thames River.

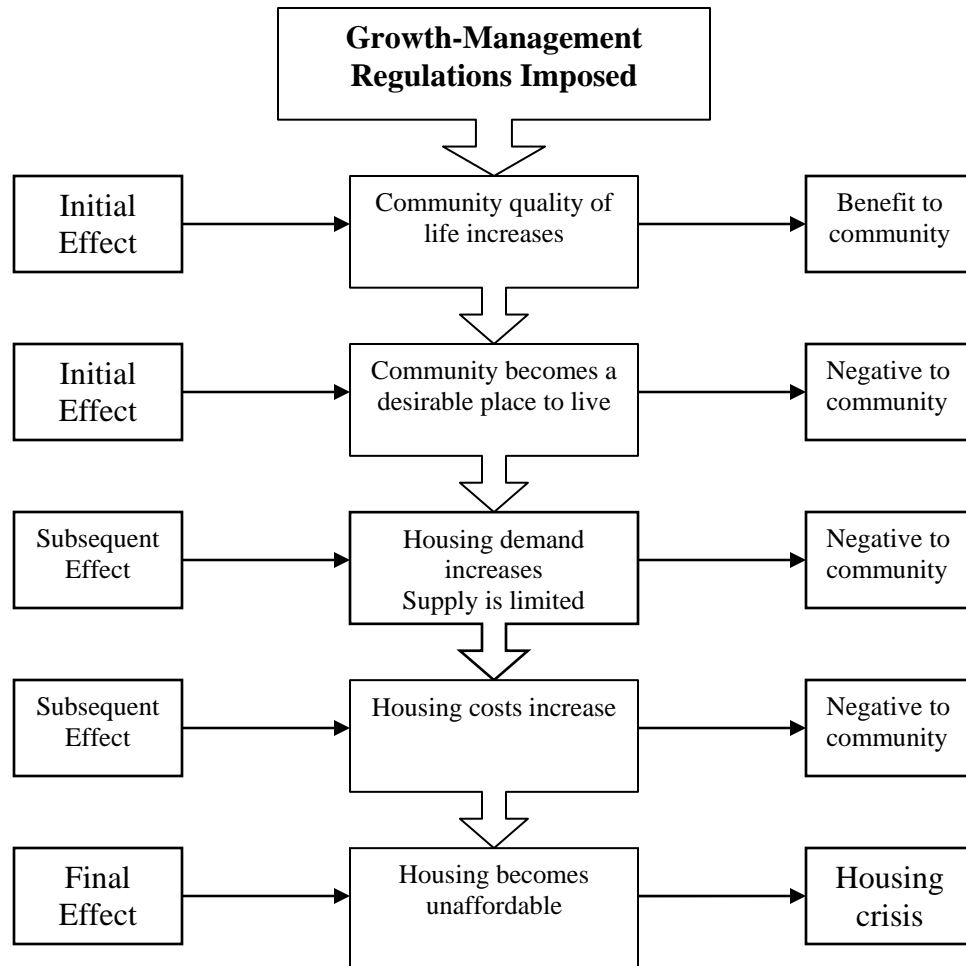


Figure 3.5: Potential Impacts on Housing Affordability in Communities with Growth Management Regulations. **Source:** Reproduced from Hettinger, W. S. (2005, p.103). *Living and working in paradise: why housing is too expensive and what communities can do about it*. Windham, CT: Thames River.

Initially there were benefits to the community followed by negative impacts on the affordable housing situation. He cited Katz & Rosen (1997) who noted that housing prices are 17 to 38 percent higher in communities with growth management regulations than communities without those.

Planning for affordable housing is one major component of mountain resort community planning. Without effective planning, any mountain resort community can expect to

experience serious social issues that ultimately will be costly to correct and eventually may lead to disintegration of the community.

A summary of this chapter follows, with identification of components most pertinent to this thesis.

3.4 SUMMARY

Migration of people has long been a consuming topic of interest to scholars who have primarily developed economically based theories of migration. In the United States internal migratory patterns have largely involved rural to urban relocation. These longtime urbanization patterns have also occurred in the Canadian context. However, in the 1960s and 1970s a counter-urbanization trend began to emerge with many rural North American areas experiencing greater population growth as a result of in-migration. This rural renaissance caused researchers to re-evaluate existing migratory theories and to begin considering new ones. In the 1980s migratory flows shifted back toward larger urban areas, with rural regions growing less substantially. The 1990s experienced both urban and rural population expansion, with many rural areas experiencing continued growth today, particularly in the mountain west. The importance of amenities in migratory decision-making became increasingly recognized. Amenities are diverse and may be assessed in relation to various anti-urban push factors and pro-rural pull factors.

While scholars in the 1950s made reference to amenities, varied meanings were assigned to the term. Laurence Moss in 1985 first made reference to “amenity migration,” defining it as “the significant contemporary societal phenomena of large numbers of people moving to places perceived as having superior natural environment or distinct culture” (Glorioso, 2000). The perceived attractive natural environment might include the landscape, the sea, climate, air and water quality and quantity or biodiversity; whereas cultural resources included all aspects of those manifestations of human groups considered significant either by the group in question or others. Moss identified two societal driving forces as causing amenity migration, namely, increasing motivation for amenity migration because of higher valuing of the physical or cultural environment

and/or the higher valuing of leisure; and greater facilitation of mobility because of increasing discretionary time, wealth and better access through improving communication and transportation technology. Amenity migrants are often property owners and may choose to live in the community either permanently, temporarily or intermittently. Usually amenity migrants are characterized as resource consumers rather than conservers.

This conceptualization of amenity migration is central to this thesis and guides the researcher's detailed examination of the RMOW and region in Chapter 4 as well as key questions asked of interviewees about the nature of amenity migration in the RMOW and region.

Because the research on amenity migration has focused on mountain communities in western Canada and the United States, much of the literature on the effects of amenity migration considers the many and varied ways in which amenity migrants have impacted the physical and cultural/social environment of these locales. The literature emphasizes the negative impacts on the environment and the social pressures on communities attempting to deal with increasing numbers of people whose expectations for goods and services are usually high. Planning for increased growth has ranged from pro-active to reactive: Chipeniuk's (2004) study demonstrates that communities vary with respect to planning capacity for amenity migration. Some major mountain resort communities experiencing considerable amenity migration such as Whistler have adopted various planning strategies to address growth. How Whistler has handled the range of issues relating to growth and in particular, the phenomenon of amenity migration in its planning endeavours is addressed in Chapter 4; the perceptions of stakeholders about the nature of amenity migration and planning strategies adopted by Whistler are key topics explored in the interviews. The responses of stakeholders are presented in Chapter 5.

Finally, understanding the evolution of mountain resort communities entails a historical perspective as well as consideration of the role of corporations in mountain resort development. A critical perspective has challenged the "growth is good at all costs"

mentality and the dilemmas of managing competing interests, maintaining economic viability and yet preserving the environment have become central for these communities. Awareness of these dilemmas enabled the researcher to explore interviewees' perspectives on how Whistler has evolved and its future challenges.

CHAPTER 4: WHISTLER: A CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide comprehensive information on the RMOW and surrounding region in order to locate Whistler, as it is popularly known, historically and within the context of current conditions. It begins with a brief overview of the RMOW and region followed by its historical development, first with reference to the First Nations in the area and then, settlers to the region. A historical timeline on Western development is presented to identify key events and major planning initiatives that have featured in its evolution as a world class destination resort community. An extensive description of existing conditions follows. These are presented as the context within which planning must occur. Significant planning initiatives in the RMOW and region are then identified. The chapter concludes with a review of the increasing research literature that examines Whistler with particular reference to amenity migration. In its entirety, the chapter provides the foundation for understanding the context in which amenity migration has occurred, what is known about the phenomenon in the RMOW, how it has been addressed in the community's planning to date, and what has been identified by researchers who have studied various aspects related to planning and development in Whistler.

4.1 OVERVIEW

The RMOW is a major North American mountain resort community, primarily known as a ski destination. With a resident population of approximately 10,000 and 2.03 million visitors per year (2003/4), it is located in the south-western portion of the Coast Mountain Range in the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD), British Columbia, Canada. The RMOW lies approximately 120 km (75 mi) from Vancouver, BC on Provincial Highway 99 and 40 km (25 mi) inland from the Pacific Ocean (RMOW Cadastral coordinates 50° 9' N, 122° 57' W). The SLRD is comprised of four electoral areas and the municipalities of Whistler, Squamish, Pemberton and Lillooet.



Figure 4.1 Whistler Locational Map
Source: Whistler Canada.com (n.d.).



Figure 4.2 SLRD Regional Boundary and Member Municipalities
Source: British Columbia Regional Index (n.d.).

4.2 FIRST NATIONS

The Coast Salish First Nations have populated the Whistler valley region for thousands of years. Replete with wildlife and natural resources, the Whistler valley was utilised as both a waypoint and trading route between the Lil'wat and Squamish First Nations (Tourism Whistler, n.d.)

The ancestral people of the Lil'wat First Nation inhabited the Mount Currie region with their traditional territories ranging as far south as Rubble Creek, north below Anderson Lakes, as far east as the Upper Stein Valley and west to coastal inlets on the Pacific Ocean, totalling approximately 7,800 sq. km (780,000 ha) (Lil'wat Nations, n.d.).

Squamish First Nation traditional territories encompass the Squamish river watershed, the northern reaches of Howe Sound and much of the greater Vancouver region totaling 6,372 sq. km (673,540 ha) (Squamish Nations, n.d.).

Today, both the Lil'wat and Squamish Nations assert traditional territorial claim to areas encompassing the Whistler valley region. In March 2001, a protocol agreement was developed between these First Nations to address land use matters, assess economic opportunities and consider co-management and shared jurisdiction in areas where their traditional territories overlap, in particular in the Whistler valley region. Both groups affirm aboriginal title to the land and waters within their traditional territories.

There are approximately 1,800 Lil'wat Nation members and 10 reserves totalling (2,929.6 ha) or .004% of lands once occupied (Lil'wat Nations, n.d.). The Squamish Nations have an approximate population of 3,295 members. Land allocated to the Squamish represent 28.89 sq. km (2,827 ha) or .423% of traditionally identified territories (Squamish Nations, n.d.).

A jointly conceived Squamish - Lil'wat Cultural Centre is currently under development in the RMOW. This Centre is being developed to promote and showcase aboriginal cultures from British Columbia and other parts of the world. In addition to the building design which incorporates a modern interpretation of both Squamish and Lil'wat traditional dwellings, there will be permanent displays for each of these Nations to share aspects of their culture with an international audience. For more detailed information on the Cultural Centre's specific facilities visit Indian and Northern Affairs Canada website (n.d.).

4.3 WESTERN DEVELOPMENT IN THE WHISTLER VALLEY

In 1980 Anne McMahon of West Vancouver, BC wrote a detailed historical account of western development in the Whistler region based on the stories and impressions of many of the early settlers to the region. These interviews focused on the tremendous changes in the region witnessed by the interviewees since their initial settlement in the early 1900s. Those interviewed included: Myrtle Philip who with her husband, Alex, established and operated Rainbow Lodge in 1914, the region's first tourist lodge and one of the primary settlements in the region, and Allison and Ross Barr who developed the first sawmill on

the shores of Green Lake in 1926. Their impressions regarding the region's substantial transformations follow:

Whistler has come a long way. Myrtle Philip looks bewildered by the millions of dollars flowing into a bustling new town where she remembers only trails winding through virgin forest. "It's unreal - it's like a dream," she exclaims. Allison and Ross Barr echo her sentiments. "I hardly know it - I feel I must be dreaming." (p.108)

McMahon concludes:

Through the years the mountains have stood unchanged by all the activity at their feet. From their peaks signs of civilization seem insignificant. The road winds like a ribbon up the valley, the hydro lines look like a spider's web, the train like a child's toy.

The skiers brought joy to the mountains. Their contagious enthusiasm attracted people in unprecedented numbers to the peaks, where they drank in the vast and exhilarating beauty of the giants. Resort trappings followed, and Whistler was transformed from a wilderness into a suburb.

Could GODA (Garibaldi Olympic Development Association) have foreseen the changes it wrought? Their scope was to provide Vancouver residents with a neighbourhood ski mountain. A winning combination of public clamour, government push and private enterprise took over their ideas and moulded them into a model of consensus which gave birth to the holiday centre we possess today.

But at the heart of it all is Nature's generosity. The mountains, icing-topped against the sky, mirrored in the sparkling waters of Alta Lake, still take your breath away.

Nothing matters but the mountains. Change flows through them like a river, but the mountains in their magnificence are there forever (p.108).

Could McMahon or these early settlers have possibly imagined the changes which have since transpired in the RMOW and region since their 1980 observations? Accurately predicting the rapid pace and direction of Whistler's development into a thriving internationally renowned four season resort community might have been difficult to predict.

McMahon's (1980) final reflections regarding "change flowing like a river through Whistler, but the mountains in their magnificence remaining forever" may even seem nearsighted and lacking a certain degree of environmental awareness, given today's heightened environmentally conscious and sustainability-minded climate. In human lifetimes, it is true that the rock and stone comprising the mountains will last indefinitely; however, changes resulting from human actions on their valley floors may ultimately affect the overall integrity of the region from an ecological perspective.

The evolution of development in the Whistler valley is detailed in the historical timeline that follows. The timeline identifies key events and planning initiatives that occurred since the middle of the 19th Century. It has been developed from a range of sources and organized chronologically. These sources included: 1) Beaudry, (2002); 2) McMahon, (1980); 3) Tourism Whistler (n.d.); and 4) The Whistler Museum & Archives (n.d.).

Table 4.1

A Historical Timeline of Western Development in the Whistler valley

YEAR	EVENTS
1858	J.W. Mackay and Major William Downie were likely the first Europeans to see the Pemberton Trail in their search for new trade routes for the Hudson's Bay Company.
1860s	Whistler Mountain originally named London Mountain by British Naval Officers surveying the region.
1873	The first horse trail cut by the Canadian Pacific Railway between Howe Sound and Pemberton. Over the next five years this trail was improved by the BC Department of Public Works and entitled the Howe Sound - Lillooet Cattle Trail.
1873 to 1880s	The development of the Cattle Trail allows for a surge in gold rush prospectors to the region. Some stayed, built trailside cabins and attempted to live off the land.
1900s	Relatively minimal yet continued settlement of prospectors and trappers in the region. Alta Lake is the original name of the area. The name Whistler later emerges as settlers used this word to describe the shrill whistle like cries made by hoary marmots living in the area.
1905	Alex Phillip, an American from Maine, moves to Nelson Island, BC to work for his father who owns a granite quarry. Although this work did not appeal to Alex, he fell in love with the coastal climate and abundant fishing. He eventually moves to Vancouver and opens the Horseshoe Grill, a restaurant located in Gastown.

1910	Alex Phillip marries a woman named Myrtle, whom he first met in Maine and corresponded with, until she came to Vancouver. While operating their Gastown restaurant which catered to many loggers and transient travellers, Alex met a man named John Miller. Originally from Texas, Miller had become a cattle wrangler. In a conversation with Alex he informed him about a cabin he had built along the Pemberton Trail, and about the chain of lakes at the head of the trail with an abundance of hungry fish. Alex was very interested as he was an avid fisher who had always dreamed of operating a fishing lodge.
1911	Myrtle and Alex Phillip decide to visit Alta Lake and Alpha Lake to see if Miller's tales were true. The trip from Vancouver lasted three days: a steam ship from Vancouver to Squamish, an overnight in Brackendale, and finally a two day journey by horse to Alta Lake. They explored the area and lakes extensively upon their arrival and were pleased to confirm John Miller's tales. They camped on the north-western shores of Alta Lake and decided to locate their fishing lodge in this vicinity.
1914	After saving \$700 from their restaurant, the Phillips purchased a 10 acre portion of lake front property on Alta Lake from an American named Charlie Chandler who had title to the land. The government at the time gave title to a quarter section of land to anyone in the region who cleared 5 acres, built a cabin and well, and resided on the land for at least 6 months a year. Myrtle's family joined them that summer and they began to build the lodge and clear the property. They completed a small lodge and sleeping cabin before the first snowfall. The lodge was named Rainbow Lodge in honour of the numerous rainbow trout in the area's lakes.
1914	The Great Pacific Eastern Railway (BC Rail today) was completed to Alta Lake and beyond to the British Columbian north and interior. This rail development opened up the region to the outside world. Railway camp headquarters moved from Cheakamus to Alta Lake. Train crews frequented the Lodge for wonderful meals prepared by Myrtle. A general store was operated by the Phillips and increasing numbers of visitors came to enjoy the fishing, hiking, trail-riding and spectacular scenery. Winters were slower but a few people would come to the Lodge and venture out on skis. Lodge expansions were undertaken over the next 20 years.
1926	The first commercial sawmill built on the shores of Green Lake. Due to its ideal location, it became very prosperous. At its peak, 40-50 men were employed despite the harsh and rugged living conditions in the bush.
1930s	By this period a few other lodges had emerged around Alta Lake. The rail camp remained and logging operations in the region were increasing. There were now approximately 10-12 children in the area who needed schooling. Parents in the area asked Myrtle Phillips to request to the government for funding for a school. No government support was provided due to a shaky economic period and the government's lack of conviction that the area would become a permanent settlement. Myrtle, however, approached the Great Pacific Eastern Railway to lease land; and with the help of parents and donations, they built a school for the children themselves. From 1930 to 1945

	Myrtle remained a member of the school board.
1940	By this period, Rainbow Lodge had become the most popular destination for tourists west of the towns of Banff and Jasper in the Rocky Mountains.
1948	Alex and Myrtle Phillip sell Rainbow Lodge to Alex Greenwood.
1950	Winter travel to Whistler becomes more feasible as a gravel road is developed to Squamish.
1959	A man named Stefan Ples moves to the area and starts the Tyrol Ski Club. He and his friends often enjoyed hiking up Whistler Creek to ski a portion of London Mountain.
1960	After heads of the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), Sidney Dawes of Montreal and Dave Matthews of Vancouver experienced the Squaw Valley Winter Olympics of 1960, they considered the potential for British Columbia to host such an event. They approached long-time ski enthusiasts and Vancouver businessmen, Franz Wilhelmsen, Chunky Woodward, Jack Shakespear and Eric Beardmore. They searched provincially for a suitable mountain. Eventually the group settled on the Garibaldi Park region based on accessibility, climate, hydro and snowfall. They formed the Garibaldi Olympic Development Association (GODA). After further helicopter studies, Whistler Mountain, formerly known as London Mountain, was selected as the most desirable site.
1960 Summer	In the summer of this year, Franz Wilhelmsen hiked all over Whistler Mountain, studying its slopes and potential ski runs. Enthusiastic about his discoveries, he convinced his skiing partners that Whistler Mountain should be developed as soon as possible. They formed the Garibaldi Lift Company, with two principle objectives: 1) the financing and supervision of required studies; and 2) the development and operation of ski lifts.
1961	GODA bids to the COC for nomination as the host community for the 1968 Winter Olympic Games. The COC realize that GODA would meet all technical requirements for a Games; however, Banff, Alberta was eventually selected as the site for the Games. The COC indicated that Whistler lacked adequate regional development and had poor highway access at this time.
1962	<p>Over the past two years, an Austrian ski expert named Willy Schaeffler was contracted by the Garibaldi Lift Company to conduct various feasibility studies. In his final 1962 feasibility study, he concludes:</p> <p><i>All my findings in the Whistler Mountain area in regard to a summer and winter recreation area are very encouraging; the high Alpine character of the above timberline terrain – the unparalleled magnificent view – the unlimited skiing potential above and below timberline for recreational skiing purposes as well as for international competition requirements – the accessibility to a city of half a million by railroad, future highway and aircraft – the growth of skiing in general as a sport for the individual as well as the family. It is everything the beginner, intermediate, advanced and expert skier could look for. At the same time, all the requirements for international Alpine ski competition are guaranteed in the most challenging terrain offered on this mountain. (as cited in McMahon, 1980, p.55)</i></p>

	Schaeffler's conclusions provided the impetus to move forward with a development plan for the mountain.
1964	After going public and experiencing some difficulty in selling shares, the Garibaldi Lift Company raised \$550,000 in share capital, enough to start initial phases of development on the mountain. An eastern company, The Power Corporation, buys the remaining shares. Western based ownership did not occur again until 1980 when the Vancouver based firm, Hastings West Resorts Inc., purchased 100% of the company shares. Power comes to the valley when BC Hydro builds the Rainbow sub-station. Within a few years, three additional large generators are required because of quickly growing demand for power.
1965	Construction begins in the summer on a four person gondola, a double chairlift, two T-bars, a day lodge, gondola barn and mid-way station. In addition to hill improvements, there is a great demand for accommodation and housing. A condominium complex with 34 units is built in Alpine Village. The first 30 units sell extremely quickly for \$9000 per unit, a high price at the time. Many of these initial investors were the lawyers, bankers and accountants who had drawn up the initial lift company papers. Seventy-five lots were also released to market at the gondola base, with more to be released near Green Lake. All lots lacked proper access. GODA bids for the 1972 Winter Olympics, but once again loses to Banff as Canada's choice.
1966	On February 15 ski lifts open to the public. The recently completed two lane gravel road from Squamish to Whistler was black-topped this year. The Whistler Chamber of Commerce is formed to oversee business and community interests in the emerging resort. The Chamber remained the resort's only local governing body for several years. A federal census taken in June identifies Whistler's population as comprising 527 residents, but Whistler residents know this number is inaccurate as there are significantly more people living in the community during the winter who are involved with ski operations. Additionally, many residents traveled or were on vacation during the June census; and many people who lived in Whistler during the summer months had not yet arrived by the June census date. The under-representation of Whistler's true population in the census was problematic as government funding for municipal services was dependent on resident population numbers.
1968	<p>The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is formed as a regional governing body. Whistler falls under its jurisdiction and sends one representative to sit on a 10 person council. This governing body was relatively ineffective for Whistler as problems facing the booming community were significantly different from those of the more economically challenged communities of Squamish, Pemberton and Lillooet that were also in the regional district.</p> <p>Water supply is arranged for Whistler through the Garibaldi Lift Company. A third, realistic and well planned bid for the 1976 Winter Games is submitted</p>

	by GODA to the COC. This time Vancouver/Whistler wins the support of the COC, but Montreal was also bidding for the 1976 Summer Games. The IOC selects Montreal for the Summer Games, and Vancouver/Whistler's bid dies as two Olympic Games in the same country in the same year would not be awarded.
1960 to 1970	During this decade, the pace of development both on and off the mountain was rapid. Many basic community services were, however, lacking including: building codes, a sewer system, fire and police services and a commercial area for residents. Without a local governing body in place, meeting the needs of residents and those of the boom town weekenders was difficult.
1974	Keen to develop British Columbia's tourism industry, the provincial NDP government begins planning for the long term viability of Whistler. The provincial government stops all development by legislating a land freeze in the Whistler valley. This freeze did not affect previously subdivided land, including 600 lots in Alpine Meadows and others around Green Lake. Residential development in Whistler outpaced commercial development. The land freeze eased growth pressures and permitted the community to evaluate its future and begin to plan its development. A Ministry of Municipal Affairs study identifies key issues for Whistler including the need for a sewer system and a town centre to act as a focal point for the community.
1975	Recognizing Whistler's unique characteristics including extreme development pressures, seasonal employment and a fluctuating population base, the provincial government, on September 6, 1975, designates the community the Resort Municipality of Whistler. This designation remains unique to Whistler. In essence, this Act follows the basic district form of municipal government, yet allows for special provisions to more effectively resolve problems unique to a resort. Under this Act, Municipal Council consisted of a mayor, three elected councillors and one councillor appointed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.
1976	Three significant events in this year foster the future long-term development of the community: 1) The provincial government approves the development of a sewage system. For the next two year period, \$6 million dollars is invested by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Authority and the Provincial Sewerage Act. Without these investments, future development in Whistler would have been unmanageable; 2) Municipal Council focuses on long-term planning strategies for the community. In September, the Zoning Bylaw was established to guide local zoning of all new developments. A Board of Variance could, however, approve exceptions. Adherence of new developments within the community to structural and fire safety codes was now ensured; 3) In December, Council adopted the Official Community Plan. This plan was a progressive step toward attempting to control unplanned growth. It envisioned the development of a town centre with accommodations and commercial development within walking distance of the new ski lifts built on the north side of Whistler mountain and a gradual slowing of growth on the gondola side.

	The provincial government calls for proposals to develop another ski hill on Blackcomb Mountain, adjacent to Whistler Mountain.
1977	Consultations and public meetings focus on a conceptual plan for the Whistler town centre to be located at the base of the north side of Whistler Mountain.
1978	The Minister of Municipal Affairs announces the Whistler Town Plan incorporating the use of 53 acres of crown land previously being held as a prospective Olympic Village Site. The Town Centre Plan includes a variety of needed community amenities including accommodations, inns, a bank, post office, drugstore and pedestrian-oriented main street. The Whistler Village Land Company is established by the municipality in arrangement with the provincial government. This subsidiary company can acquire, manage, develop and sell any land or buildings within the new village. Ski hill developments begin on Blackcomb Mountain.
1979	Construction begins on the Town Centre. Ten architects and builders are employed to facilitate variety of architectural style. Nine million dollars is granted to the Whistler Village Land Company through a joint federal and provincial program to support tourism development named the Travel Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement. Of the \$50 million granted to BC, \$16 million is allotted specifically for ski industry development.
1980	Phase one of the Town Centre is largely completed. Blackcomb Mountain opens to the public, its first phase planned to coincide with the development of the Town Centre. A ten phase development plan was created for Blackcomb, with 10 to 15 years foreseen for completion. With two adjacent mountains in operation, the RMOW becomes one of the largest ski resorts in North America.
1983	Beginning in the early 1980s Whistler experiences a downturn in the economy causing bankruptcies, widespread unemployment and abandoned contracts leaving many unfinished buildings and empty construction sites in the Village. Future viability of the resort looked bleak. To rescue the economically depressed resort, the provincial government, on January 3 rd , formed WLC Developments to take over the assets and liabilities of the bankrupt Whistler Village Land Development Company. A \$21 million dollar loan was secured to bail out the resort. Protesting taxpayers and the media viewed the loan as a “bailout for the rich.” This loan came, however, with a penalty - the loss of local decision-making control. Decision-making powers were granted to the WLC Development’s Board of Directors. Many locals thought the Board was uninformed and lacked awareness of the complexities of operating and developing a successful mountain resort.
1986	Vancouver hosts the World Expo’86, resulting in favourable publicity for the region including the RMOW. Aspen Skiing Company, having been responsible since 1978 for the development of Blackcomb Mountain, decides to divest its interest in the mountain. This decision forces Hugh Smythe, previously with the Aspen Skiing Company, to search for a new partner willing to invest significantly into mountain operations. Smythe forms a partnership with Joe Houssian, the Chairman, President and CEO of Intrawest, a Vancouver-based firm founded in 1976 specializing in urban

1986 cont'd	residential and commercial development. Smythe suggested that Intrawest purchase Blackcomb and invest in both mountain improvements and operations and real estate development at its base. Intrawest acquired Blackcomb Mountain, thereby creating a unique merger of ski resort operations and real estate development expertise. Canadian Pacific Hotels announces development of the Chateau Whistler, encouraging the RMOW to seriously consider year round tourism opportunities. The RMOW Parks Board is established to begin guiding the development of summer recreational amenities in the municipality. Under the leadership of RMOW Mayor Drew Meredith, a two percent hotel sales tax was proposed and legislated as an additional municipal revenue stream to help fund the high level of services required in the RMOW.
1990	Expansions underway in the new Village North site. The provincial government begins to recoup its 1983, \$21 million dollar loan and even starts to turn a profit on its investment.
1992	Whistler voted as the “Number One Ski Resort in North America” by Snow Country Magazine. Whistler wins this award often over the next decade.
1995	The provincial government relinquishes decision-making control over the RMOW and allows the municipality to again pass its own bylaws.
1998	Blackcomb Mountain and Whistler Mountain merge under Intrawest.
2000	RMOW and other organizations within the municipality adopt The Natural Step Framework for environmental education and guidance to enable both individuals and organizations to move toward more sustainable environmental practices. Foci include lifestyle practices to the modification of operational business practices within organizations to reduce environmental impacts.
2002	The IOC short lists Vancouver/Whistler as candidate cities to host the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.
2003	Vancouver/Whistler successfully win the bid to host the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. Whistler Blackcomb voted the “Number One Ski Resort in North America” by Skiing Magazine.
2005	Whistler wins 3 rd place overall and the Silver Livcom Award within the 0-10,000 population size category. Livcom Awards are a global award competition endorsed by the United Nations Environment Programme. These awards focus on evaluating cities and towns based on their community liveability and management of the local environment. The RMOW also wins Livcom’s Planning for the Future Award for the development of the Whistler 2020 Plan. This award is presented to communities that have developed sensitive and creative plans to help guide their communities toward more liveable, sustainable communities.

The next portion of this chapter provides an overview of existing conditions and community characteristics of the RMOW and region with a focus on social, economic and environmental attributes. Although this overview is selective, it is intended to

provide a general depiction of various community characteristics which are important in the consideration of planning related to amenity migration.

4.4 RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Information presented in this section was drawn from the following key sources:

- The 2003/04 RMOW Monitoring Report produced by the RMOW on a yearly basis since 1993. This document reports on the status of a wide variety of issues concerning the RMOW and region ranging from the state of the environment to various economic and social conditions within the municipality, (RMOW Planning and Development Services, 2004).
- A comprehensive fact sheet identifying a variety of community characteristics and a demographic community profile which are available on links from the About Whistler page on the RMOW's official website (n.d.).
- 2001 Canadian Census, community profiles data for Whistler, BC (Statistics Canada, 2005).

4.4.1 Environmental Conditions and Ecological Characteristics

Bioregional Context - As one of four member municipalities in the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, the RMOW is situated at the base of a wide mountain valley. Regionally, the area is characterized by steep mountains with glacial terrain and fertile river valleys and floodplains. The region contains significant forested terrain with biogeoclimatic zones ranging from wet Coastal Western Hemlock in western areas near Howe Sound to drier Interior Douglas Fir zones in the Lillooet River watershed. The Whistler valley can be described as an oversteepened glacial valley with inflowing hanging side valleys. The broad valley floor is situated approximately 675 meters (2114 ft.) above sea level, rising to mountain elevations as high as 2,284 meters (7493 ft). In the high alpine, scoured bedrock and steepened valley walls provide evidence of large valley glacial activity during the last glacial epoch. Rugged mountain peaks and glacial cirques above timberline are also characteristic features of past glacial activity in the region.

Watersheds and Aquatic Features - Whistler and the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District are situated within the larger Fraser Basin. This biogeographical area covers approximately one-quarter of the province (240,000 sq. km) and is drained by the Fraser River and its 13 main watersheds. Approximately 3% (500 ha) of the RMOW's land is comprised of lakes and watercourses. Primary aquatic features in the Whistler valley include Fitzsimmons Creek and four lakes: Alpha Lake, Nita Lake, Alta Lake and Green Lake. Fitzsimmons Creek's main sources originate in the snowfields of Overlord Mountain and Mount Fitzsimmons with seven named glaciers, eight creeks and three lakes. In the Whistler valley, Alta Lake sits at a height of land which drains both south to the Cheakamus River and north into the Green River. As a tributary in the Squamish River Watershed, the Cheakamus River drains into Howe Sound. Green River, a tributary of the Lillooet River watershed, flows into the Fraser River Basin.

Fauna - Given the region's biodiverse montane characteristics, fertile river and floodplain ecosystems, a wide variety of fish and wildlife are present in the region including salmon, mountain goats, deer, black bear, bald eagle and spotted owl.

Identified Sensitive Ecosystems - The following ecosystems and their approximate size within the RMOW boundaries have been identified as environmentally sensitive areas: Lakes and Watercourses (500 ha); Alluvial Forests (202 ha); Old/Mature Forests (8,916 ha); Wetlands (198 ha); Riparian Areas (178 ha); and High Elevation Ecosystems (1,337 ha).

Climatic Zone - Located in the Temperate West Coast Climatic Region influenced by the north Pacific Ocean, prevailing westerly winds and mountainous topography, the region generally experiences mild winters, cool summers and significant annual precipitation.

Maintaining the integrity of these natural systems in the face of increased amenity migration, population growth and tourism is integral to the overall viability of the RMOW from an environmental and economic standpoint.

4.4.2 Development Patterns and Land Use Characteristics

Development Patterns - The majority of the RMOW's twenty-seven existing residential neighbourhoods are located in a nodal pattern along Highway 99. Acting as the backbone of the municipal road network, Highway 99 spans a distance of approximately 15.8 km (9.8 mi) through the RMOW traversing the valley in a north-south direction. Although this is not necessarily the most compact form of residential development, the nodal nature of development has allowed for the preservation of green space and easy access to natural areas between these neighbourhoods.



Figure 4.3 RMOW Neighbourhood Map

Source: Whistlermaps.com (n.d.).

Whistler Village, located at the ski base of Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains, acts as a community core. The Village is a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use town centre complete with tourist accommodations, core commercial and retail services, boutiques, a variety of food and entertainment services, public and institutional uses and an assortment of public spaces. In addition, secondary commercial centres are also located in Whistler Creek, Nesters Square and Function Junction - the RMOW's light industrial area located on the southern edge of the municipality's boundaries.

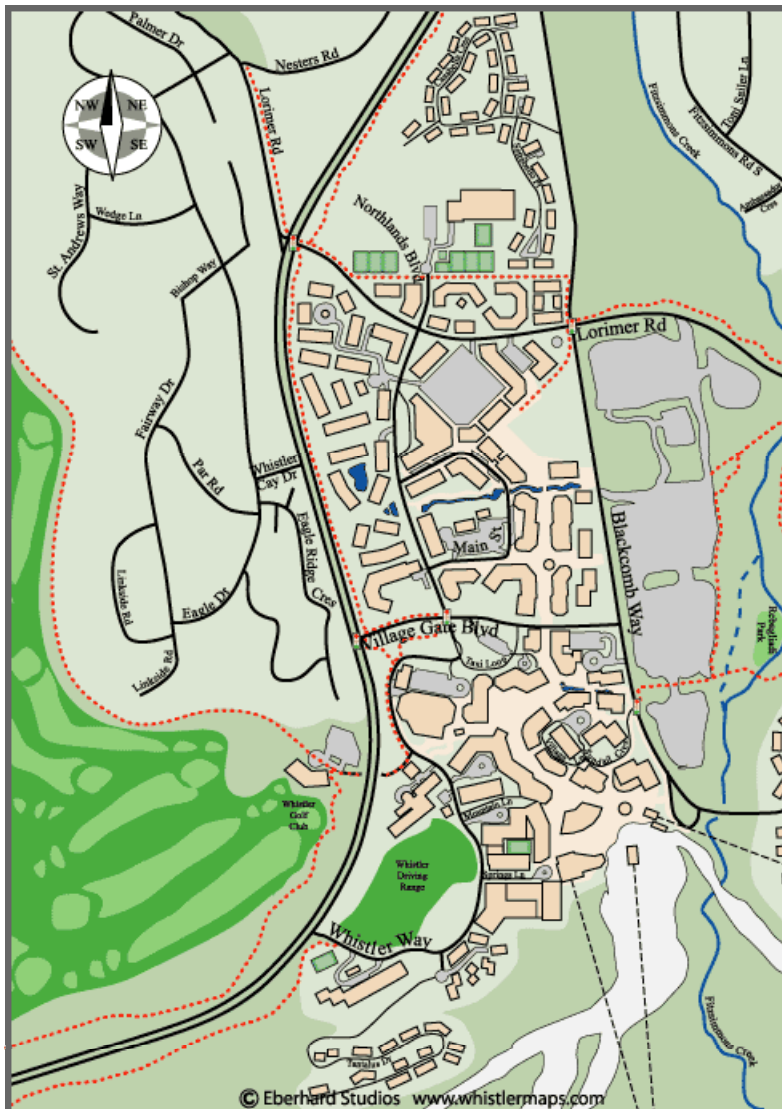


Figure 4.4 RMOW Village Centre Map

Source: Whistlermaps.com (n.d).

Municipal Land Area - Total land area within the municipal boundary 16,530 ha (40,846 ac).

Land Use Zoning and Distribution - Approximately 7.6 % (1,250 ha / 3,089 ac) of land within the municipality is developed or has been zoned for development. Ninety-two percent of municipal lands is zoned as rural resource or residential estate and has extremely limited development potential allowing only limited low density uses on parcel sizes of 40 hectares or greater. Extensive zoning classifications are placed on the remaining developed areas, many designed on a parcel-specific basis in order to allow for multiple uses and varying densities.

Table 4.2

RMOW Zoning Distributions by Land Use

Land Distribution by Zoning	Total RMOW Area			
	(m2)	(ha)	% of Developed Areas	% Total Land
Rural Resource*	152,021,401	15,202	N/A	92.0%
Residential	4,370,645	437	34.2%	2.6%
Residential Tourist Accommodation	834,380	83	7 %	0.5%
Commercial & Commercial Accommodation	2,538,981	254	20 %	1.5%
Institutional	80,091	8	1%	0.0%
Industrial	486,225	49	4%	0.3%
Parks & Protected Areas	4,963,410	496	N/A	3.0%
Total	165,295,133	16,530		100.0%
*includes Residential Single Family Estate (RSE1 Zone)				

Source: Modified by Author, RMOW Planning and Development Services. (2004). *Resort Community Monitoring Report 2003/04*. Whistler, BC: Resort Municipality of Whistler.

4.4.3 Socio-economic and Demographic Characteristics

Population - In 2003 the RMOW had an estimated permanent resident population (those who identified the RMOW as their usual place of residence) of 9,480. However, the 2003 total daily winter season population was 3.3 times greater, averaging 31,351 people per day. This figure includes 4,558 seasonal/part time residents, 3,284 commuting employees, 14,029 visitors and 9,480 permanent residents. The majority of the 3,284

commuting employees reside in the neighbouring communities of Pemberton and Squamish, representing 19% of Squamish and Pemberton's total combined population. During the 2003 winter season 14,057 employees worked in the RMOW with 76% living in the municipality. The daily average of second homeowners (included in the figure for seasonal/part time residents) in the RMOW is estimated to be 633 per day. The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District had a total 2003 population of 35,179. From 1993 to 2003 the Regional District's population grew by 28% or 7,718 persons. Fifty percent of this increase occurred in the RMOW, 26% in Squamish and 18% in Pemberton. Pemberton experienced the most rapid population growth during this period with an average annual growth rate of 13%.

Table 4.3

Populations and Densities of SLRD Member Municipalities

SLRD Community	2003 Population	Land Area (km ²)	Density (persons/km ²)
Squamish	14,954	95	156.7
Whistler	9,480	162	58.6
Pemberton	1,997	4	452.8
Total SLRD	35,179	16,694	2.1

Source: BC stats and Statistics Canada as presented in: RMOW Planning and Development Services. (2004). *Resort Community Monitoring Report 2003/04*. Whistler, BC: Resort Municipality of Whistler.

RMOW and Regional Age Distribution - According to 2001 census data, the RMOW's resident age distribution is atypical in comparison to provincial trends. The RMOW's resident population is comprised of a large proportion of young adults, with fewer children, youth and senior citizens in comparison to other British Columbian communities. Whistler's youthful population is demonstrated by a median population age of 30 years in comparison to the provincial median of 38 years of age. Residents aged between 20 and 44 (16% aged between 20–24) comprised 64% percent of the total population, while those aged 65 or older made up less than 3% of the population.

Between the 1996 and 2001 census the RMOW experienced increases in all age cohorts. However, the most significant increases occurred in the 40-64 year old age group. Although, the RMOW has experienced a general aging population trend, its significance in relation to provincial aging trends was considerably less significant, mainly offset by the RMOW's large young adult population. The following table, presented in the 2003/2004 RMOW Monitoring Report, identifies regional age distribution data compiled from the 2001 Canadian census:

Table 4.4

Census Population and Age Distribution Data

	RMOW	Pemberton	Squamish	BC
2001 Census Population	8,896	1,637	14,247	3,907,738
Median Age (Years)	30	33	36	38
Age Distribution (%)				
Age 0-19	17%	24%	30%	25%
Age 20-24	16%	5%	6%	6%
Age 25-44	48%	55%	32%	30%
Age 45-64	17%	13%	23%	25%
Age 65+	3%	2%	9%	14%

Source: Statistics Canada 2001 Census Data in: RMOW Planning and Development Services. (2004). *Resort Community Monitoring Report 2003/04*. Whistler, BC: Resort Municipality of Whistler.

RMOW Resident Mobility - According to 2001 Census mobility data, there is significant turnover and mobility within the RMOW's permanent population. A meagre 26% of residents in 2001 had the same address as five years earlier, in contrast with 54% of other residents in BC. In 2001, 33% of RMOW residents had lived at a different address the previous year. This was a change from 1996 where 42% of the Whistler resident population lived at a different address the prior year.

Table 4.5**RMOW Resident Mobility**

	RMOW	Pemberton	Squamish	BC
Mobility Status (%)				
Same address 1 year ago	66%	66%	83%	84%
Same address 5 years ago	26%	22%	52%	54%
Different province 1 year ago	7%	3%	2%	3%
Different province 5 years ago	24%	11%	6%	10%

Source: RMOW Planning and Development Services. (2004). *Resort Community Monitoring Report 2003/04*. Whistler, BC: Resort Municipality of Whistler.

Accommodation and Housing - In 2003 there were 14,413 developed dwelling units or (48,853 bed units) in the RMOW. According to the RMOW's Official Community Plan, bed units are a measure of a quantity of development intended to reflect servicing and facility requirements for one person. Bed units refer to a standard number per housing type and have become a growth management tool. For example, a detached dwelling entails 6 bed units. At present, the RMOW has determined a growth cap or bed cap of 55,087 bed units or (15,970 dwelling units). This bed cap includes all hotel, commercial and market housing development in the RMOW. It is estimated that 28% of RMOW private property owners reside in the community while 72% reside outside of the community based on current property mailing addresses. The RMOW has identified a goal of housing a minimum of 75% of the employee workforce. In 2003/04, 76% of the resident workforce resided in the municipality. Bed unit allocations are identified in Table 4.6 on the following page.

Table 4.6

Allocation of Bed Units as a Growth Measurement Tool as Utilised by the RMOW Planning Department

RMOW Bed Unit Allocations		
Accommodation Type	Unit Size (sq. m)	No. of (Bed Units)
Multiple Residential Dwelling Units	0-55	2
	55-100	3
	100+	4
Commercial Accommodation: Guest Room, Sleeping Unit, Dwelling Unit	0-55	2
	55-100	3
	100+	4
Pension Guest Room	N/A	1.5
Bed and Breakfast	N/A	6
Campsite	N/A	1
Detached Dwelling	N/A	6
Duplex Dwelling	N/A	12
Dormitory Bed	N/A	0.5

Source: Whistler Official Community Plan (2002).

Cost of Housing - According to 2003 data:

Average sale price of a single family home \$1,354,000 (CDN)

Average sale price of a single family lot \$1,112,615 (CDN)

Average sale price of a condominium \$735, 288 (CDN)

Since 1993, average purchase prices have increased an average of 28% per year for condominiums, 30% per year for single family homes and 50% per year for vacant single family lots.

Income Distribution - Resident and household incomes in Whistler were higher in comparison to provincial and neighbouring communities according to 2001 Canadian census data. Median per capita income of Whistler residents was \$27,116 (CDN), 23% (or \$5,021) greater than the provincial median. The median family income for Whistler couples was \$75,852 (CDN), 26% (or \$15,574) greater than the provincial median.

Median household income for all Whistler households was \$58,906 (CDN), 26% (or \$12,104 CDN) greater than the British Columbian median.

Employment - As a resort based economy, the RMOW's economic performance and viability is largely dependent on the tourism industry. This is reflected by the RMOW's labour force which is predominantly employed in service sector positions. In 2001, 89% of the workforce was employed in the service sector. Nearly a third of all RMOW jobs were in accommodation and food services, in comparison to provincial averages closer to 8%. Business services were the second largest concentration of labour force activity totalling 18% of RMOW jobs, while both retail trade and arts and entertainment industries comprised 10% respectively. Health and education represented 8% and wholesale and retail, 10%. A very small percentage (11%) of the RMOW's workforce was employed in goods production with a majority of these jobs concentrated in construction (8.6%). Manufacturing and resourced based industries represented a very small percentage of the RMOW's labour force (3%).

Education - Comparatively speaking, the RMOW's permanent resident population is highly educated with 28% holding a university degree and 19% holding a college diploma compared to 18% and 17% provincially. A further 68% of the RMOW's population aged 20 years of age or older has had post-secondary education, in comparison to 51% of the provincial population.

Cultural Diversity - Six percent of the total RMOW's permanent 2001 resident population identified themselves as a visible minority, an increase from 4% in 1996. This is in comparison to 22% provincially, 17% in Squamish and 6.5% of residents in Pemberton. The RMOW's First Nation population is relatively small representing only 1% (approximately 115 persons) of the total RMOW 2001 population. Regionally, First Nations represent 11% of the total SLRD population (3,695 persons). The traditional and overlapping territories of both the Squamish and Lil'Wat First Nations encompass a large portion of the SLRD: First Nations communities can be found in Squamish, Mt. Currie,

Anderson Lake, Seton Lake and the area around Lillooet and Lillooet Lake south to Harrison Lake.

Local Governance - The RMOW is governed by a Council consisting of one mayor and six councillors, with an elected term of three years. Most recent elections were held in November, 2005.

Regional Governance - There are four electoral areas identified as A, B, C, and D as well as four municipalities - Whistler, Squamish, Pemberton and Lillooet within the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District. The SLRD's mission is to: "Enhance the quality of life of constituents through the facilitation of regional and community services for the benefit of present and future generations." The Regional Board is made up of one elected director from each of the four electoral areas and the mayors from each of the municipalities, with the exception of Squamish where a municipal councillor as well as the mayor sit on the Board as directors.

Crime Statistics - Crime rates in the RMOW in relation to provincial crime rates are often as much as two times greater. These elevated rates occur as a result of the nature of a resort community such as the RMOW, with its large visitor numbers and seasonally employed population often contributing to a total daily winter population 3.3 times the permanent resident population. A strict no-tolerance policy towards rowdiness, public drunkenness and open alcohol in Whistler Village may also affect the statistics. Property crimes are the majority of criminal code offences which take place in the RMOW.

4.4.4 Community Services

Municipal Revenues - Several revenue sources are relied upon to fund basic community services. These include annual property taxes, a portion of the provincial hotel tax levied on short-term accommodation, municipal user fees and service charges.

Healthcare - Health care facilities provided in the RMOW are provincially funded, under the administration of the Vancouver Coast Regional Health Unit. The Whistler Health

Care Centre is operated and governed by the Sea to Sky Community Health Council. The facility is open daily with an on-call physician serving late evening and early morning hours. An urgent care unit, full x-ray, laboratory and heli-pad services are available on site. Stabilization of patients with more serious injuries can be performed on site; however, these patients once stabilized are transported via helicopter or ambulance to Vancouver. Given the sport recreation-based nature of the community, a high percentage of emergency room visits are sport-related injuries. Based on health unit data, there has been a noticeable decline of winter mountain-related injuries and an increase in bicycle-related injuries. Community services such as public health, environmental health, home care nursing, mental health, and alcohol and drug addiction counselling are also provided by the Vancouver Coast Regional Health Unit.

Education - The RMOW falls under the administration of the Howe Sound School District No. 48, which is responsible for public school system delivery from Squamish to Pemberton. The district had a total of 4,476 students enrolled in 2003/4, with 8 elementary schools, 2 community schools and 4 secondary schools.

The RMOW has 3 public schools, two elementary and one secondary. In 2003/4 RMOW schools had a total enrolment of 822 students representing 18% of the district total. With the opening of Whistler's Spring Creek Elementary in 2004 and expansions at Whistler Secondary, additional student capacity in the RMOW has grown to an additional 288 students beyond 2003/4 enrolment numbers. Between 1992 and 2003 the RMOW experienced the greatest percentage growth 187% (536 students) in enrolment than other communities in the district. However, since 1998 to 2003 there has been a 10.6% (97 students) decrease in enrolment in the RMOW. A similar decline in student enrolment in the entire Howe Sound District has also taken place. In addition to the RMOW's public schools, there are a number of alternative private school programs in the region, an Adult Learning Centre and three registered daycares in the RMOW.

Social Services -Whistler Community Social Services was formed in 1989 as a registered non-profit society focusing on the development of programs to address potential gaps in

health and welfare services in the community. The society's mission is to "Support social sustainability in Whistler by providing services that improve the ability of Whistler community members to meet their needs and enhance their lives." Currently the society acts as an umbrella organization supporting 24 different community initiatives and programs including: youth outreach and counselling, Whistler Welcome Week, the Whistler Food Bank, the Interim Housing Project and emergency financial assistance.

Police Services - Law enforcement in the RMOW is conducted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with 23 officers. A Bylaw Services staff of 17 officers is employed for bylaw enforcement.

Fire Rescue Services - The RMOW fire rescue services consists of a fire chief, 4 assistant chiefs, 15 full-time firefighter/inspectors and 60 on-call firefighters. There are three fire halls located within the RMOW. Fire Hall 1, located in Whistler Village, is staffed to operate full time 24 hours a day, whereas the two other fire halls located in Alpine and Spring Creek respectively are staffed by on-call firefighters. This department's duties also include performance of fire inspections, issuing of burn permits and provision of fire safety education to the community.

Transportation - Public transit within the RMOW is provided by the Whistler And Valley Express (WAVE). This fleet of 24 buses, equipped with ski and bike racks, runs twenty-two hours daily from 5:30 am to 3:30 am. A free shuttle service is also provided between the Whistler Village area and Lost Lake Park during the summer. Since the WAVE's inception in 1991, transit ridership has increased steadily with a peak of 2.87 million riders in 2001/02 making it one of the top performing transit systems in the region. Decisions regarding fares, routes and service levels are made by the RMOW based on information and planning provided by the Municipal Systems Program of BC Transit. Eighty-seven percent of Whistler residences are located within 400m of a bus stop and the paved multi-use Valley Trail. Additionally, from November 2005 to April 2006, the District of Squamish and the RMOW are offering the Sea to Sky Transit, Squamish - Whistler Commuter service for Squamish residents who commute to

Whistler. This service is scheduled to meet shift start and end times (8am, 3pm and 11pm). Other alternative transportation pilot projects such as an employee transit pass project and car sharing project have also been supported by the RMOW.

Whistler Public Library - The RMOW's public library has reported substantial circulation growth since the 1990s to the extent that facility capacity was reached. An expanded, LEED certified public library is currently under construction in Whistler Village on the same site as the former library.

4.4.5 Parks and Recreational Amenities

Provincial Parks in the Whistler Valley Region - These include:

Alice Lake Provincial Park;	Garibaldi Provincial Park;
Blackcomb Glacier Provincial Park;	Nairn Falls Provincial Park;
Brandywine Falls Provincial Park;	Tantalus Provincial Park.
Callaghan Lake Provincial Park;	

RMOW Parks - The RMOW contains nine larger municipal parks and ten neighbourhood parks comprising 551.3 ha (1362.3 ac) of total parkland as well as the Emerald Forest Conservation Area and the Rainbow Wetlands Reserve.

The Whistler Interpretive Forest - This forest is approximately 3,000 ha (7,413 ac) in size, with 16 km (10 mi) of walking or mountain bike trails located near Function Junction, RMOW's light industrial neighbourhood.

Valley Trail - This is a paved multi-use 32 km (19.8 mi) trail which stretches extensively through the RMOW from the neighbourhoods of Spring Creek to Emerald Estates.

Flank Trail - A multi-use trail, 43 km (28.6 mi) long, links the Callaghan Valley to 16-Mile Creek.

Lost Lake Cross Country Ski Trails - These involve 32 km (19.8 mi) of track set and groomed trails.

Tennis Courts - Fifteen public courts are located within the municipality.

Mountain Bike Trails - 80.5 km (50 mi.) of double track, 38.5 km (22.25 mi) of single track maintained by the municipality.

Meadow Park Recreational Facility - This facility includes a pool, ice skating rink, fitness centre and squash courts.

Whistler-Blackcomb Mountains - With a combined total of 33 lifts servicing over 200+ runs and 8,171 acres (3,307 ha) of skiable terrain, Whistler-Blackcomb is one of the largest North American ski hills, with an hourly lift capacity of 59,007 skiers per hour.

Golf - There are three championship 18 hole designer golf courses: Nicklaus North Golf Course, Whistler Golf Club and the Chateau Whistler Golf Course.

These current conditions comprise the context within which two developments will have major ramifications for RMOW and its environs, namely, the fast-approaching 2010 Winter Olympic Games and future population changes.

4.5 THE 2010 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

In 1998, the Canadian Olympic Association selected Vancouver-Whistler as the official Canadian candidate for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. The following year, the Vancouver-Whistler 2010 bid corporation was formed to produce a formal bid to the IOC. On August 28, 2002 Vancouver-Whistler was short-listed by the IOC as a potential host candidate for the Games. After a tight race with other short-listed cities, the IOC eventually selected Vancouver-Whistler as the host communities for the Games in a vote held July 2, 2003 in Prague.

The 2010 Olympic Winter Games will be jointly hosted by Vancouver and the RMOW over a two-week period from February 12 to February 28, 2010 followed by the Paralympic Winter Games held in Whistler from March 12 to March 21, 2010.

There is little doubt that the 2010 Winter Olympic Games will be an extremely exciting event for the RMOW and surrounding region. It will be an important page in the history and future of the municipality and region. That said, there will be many complex considerations for all parties involved in the process of planning and delivery of these Games. This will be especially true if an underlying goal of the Games is to maximize potential community benefits while also minimizing potential negative impacts that can result from hosting a world class mega-event such as these.

Considerable work has already taken place on the design of sport venues and Athlete Village plans for the RMOW. However, a majority of the plans are still undergoing revision. Recent plan revisions and design changes have been attributed to budget concerns related to rising construction costs in British Columbia (“Olympic Costs Soar”, 2005). As a result of the current building boom in the province, it is estimated that there will be significant labour shortages for Olympic venue-related construction. In addition to potential labour shortages, the cost of key construction materials such as concrete and steel has also been on the rise. Inflation and the fact that the Vancouver 2010 Bid Book budget was conducted in 2002 dollars are also a consideration in the cost overruns.

The RMOW will provide both existing and new venues for a majority of the Olympic Nordic events as well as an Athlete Village for competitors and their support staff competing in events in Whistler. Transportation improvements have already begun along the Sea to Sky Corridor, from Vancouver to the RMOW.

According to information provided by the Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC), the organization formed after successfully winning the bid whose mandate is to support, plan, organize, finance and stage the Games, the venues identified in Table 4.7 will be held in the RMOW.

Table 4.7

Proposed and Existing 2010 Winter Olympic Venues in Whistler

Proposed Facility	Events	Status
<i>Olympic Winter Games Venues, Whistler</i>		
Whistler Creekside	Alpine Skiing (Speed and Technical Events)	Existing
Whistler sliding centre, Blackcomb Mountain	Bobsleigh, Luge, Skeleton	New
Whistler nordic venue, Callaghan Valley	Biathlon, Cross Country Skiing, Nordic Combined, Ski Jumping	New
<i>Paralympic Winter Games Venues, Whistler</i>		
Whistler Creekside	Alpine Skiing	Existing
Whistler nordic venue, Callaghan Valley	Biathlon, Cross Country Skiing	New
Meadow Park Sports Centre	Wheelchair Curling	Existing
Whistler arena	Ice Sledge Hockey	New

Source: 2010 VANOC, Winter Olympic Venue page (n.d.).

4.5.1 Whistler Athlete Village

The Whistler Athlete Village and post Games Legacy Neighbourhood will be located in an area approximately 130 ha (321 ac) in size, immediately to the South of the RMOW's commercial/light industrial area (Function Junction). A portion of this site has been the site of the RMOW's municipal landfill, which will be decommissioned and reclaimed to make way for Athlete Village development. The Whistler Interpretive Forest and the Cheakamus River border the Village site which is approximately 10 km (6mi) from Whistler Village, 5 km (3 mi) from Whistler Creek and 12 km (7.5 mi) from the Nordic Centre which will be located in the Callaghan Valley.

Although final designs for the Athlete Village are still under review, the IOC has identified a number of essential amenities as required components for any Olympic Games Athlete Village. Successful provision of IOC Athlete Village facility requirements is paramount not only for operational success during the Games, but also as an extremely important contributing factor in athletes' satisfaction during their stay in the Village. Based on IOC requirements, the Village will house approximately 2,950 people, including participating athletes and their support staff. Five main components of the Village will include a residential zone, international zone, a transport mall, catering facility and operations support area. Specific required amenities include: team-meeting areas, a polyclinic, a multi-faith religious centre, retail space, office space, warehousing space, athlete recreation facilities, a 24-hour catering facility and media facilities. It is estimated that the Village itself will have a footprint of 30 ha (75 ac) and be 1 million square feet in size, half of which will be allocated toward housing.

Site servicing and architectural design is expected to occur throughout 2006. Construction is slated to begin in 2007, and to be completed prior to August 31, 2009, when the Village will be turned over to VANOC until the completion of the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. Post Games, the Athlete's Village will be returned to the jurisdiction of the RMOW by May 31, 2010.

4.5.2 Post Games Legacy Neighbourhood

Post Games, the RMOW will begin converting the Athlete Village into the municipality's newest resident restricted housing neighbourhood, entitled the Legacy Neighbourhood. Precise details regarding the facilities and amenities that will be incorporated from the Athlete Village into the Legacy Neighbourhood are not yet known. The permanent versus temporary nature of some of the proposed facilities for the Athlete Village are still under review due to aforementioned budgetary concerns.

According to the conceptual masterplan, the Legacy Neighbourhood will provide approximately 278 new resident restricted homes with a mix of dwelling types including the potential for twelve live/work units. These homes will be built in distinct

development clusters in order to respect the natural characteristics of the site, including the Cheakamus River which will be preserved as a wildlife and recreation corridor. Residential clusters will be linked to a pedestrian-oriented mixed use community commercial core by sidewalks, trails and an alternatively designed street network. The street network is intended to limit through traffic and minimize visual and environmental impacts of development. The pedestrian-oriented community core will contain a plaza, essential community retail services, an athlete training facility and hotel/hostel and various mixed-use buildings with residential above. A naturalized meadow park is proposed on the re-contoured landfill site containing a mix of active and passive programming such as playing fields, community gardens and an outdoor amphitheatre.

Information pertaining to the Athlete's Village and Legacy Neighbourhood were synthesized from information available on the RMOW's official website on pages related to the athlete's village (n.d.) and public documents such as the Whistler Legacy Neighbourhood & Athlete Village Public Open House Report, (January, 11, 2006) produced by the design firm Ekistics Town Planning, Vancouver, BC in conjunction with Brent Harley and Associates, Whistler, BC.

4.5.3 Sea to Sky Corridor Transportation

In light of being awarded the 2010 Winter Games and as a precondition identified in the Vancouver 2010 Bid Book (2002), the British Columbia government committed to extensively improve the often treacherous single lane Sea to Sky Highway 99 between Vancouver and Whistler. Project upgrades, which began in May 2004, with an anticipated completion by 2009, are focused on improving road capacity, safety and reliability, in order to meet Olympic travel demands as well as the long-term transportation needs of communities within the corridor. Table 4.8 on the following page identifies the extent and portion of laneway expansion from the Second Narrows Bridge in Vancouver to the entrance of the RMOW.

Table 4.8

Sea to Sky Highway 99 Expansions

Number of Lanes	Number of Kilometers	Percentage of Highway
5 Lanes	3 km	2%
4 Lanes	28.3 km	23%
3 Lanes	91.7 km	75 %

Source: Vancouver 2010 Bid Book, Theme 14 - Transport, 2002 (p. 66).

Extensive logistical planning will be required to deliver a streamlined and successful multi-modal transportation network for the athletes, Olympic Family, media and spectators not only to and from the RMOW and Vancouver, but also within the RMOW during the Games.

As with most major infrastructure projects such as the Highway 99 improvements, there are multiple ways to evaluate the merits or disadvantages of the project based on the values of those doing the analysis. For instance, the Highway 99 lane expansions may improve travel times in the region and reduce traffic fatalities. However, improved motor vehicle access may also encourage further growth and development pressures on communities in the region and further promote increased dependence on the automobile as a primary mode of transportation in the region.

Some environmentally oriented planning groups, such as Better Environmentally Sound Transportation of Vancouver, BC have even questioned the legitimacy and socio-economic and environmental sustainability of an expanded Sea to Sky Highway 99. The Games have been promoted by organizers as an Olympic Games which will attempt to integrate and implement principles of social, economic and environmental sustainability into all aspects of the Games in the short and long-term (Washbrook, 2003). This is in keeping with the IOC's dedication to the advancement of sustainable development through Olympic Games.

In addition to the major Sea to Sky Highway 99 improvements, various marine passenger services, rail and motor coach options are also in consideration for the Sea to Sky corridor at least for the duration of the Games.

4.6 RMOW AND REGIONAL POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections have been developed by the RMOW and SLRD in an attempt to predict future resident populations in both the RMOW and regional district. Completely accurate population forecasting is difficult, given the multitude of variables which can affect population change. However, these predictions are nonetheless useful for estimating the extent of services required and potential impacts that a region or municipality may experience from population change.

Based on a 2.7% annual growth rate, the RMOW's resident population of 9,480 in 2003 is expected to grow to 15,000 by 2020. Of these estimated 15,000 permanent residents, 10,700 will be resident employees and family, while the remaining 4,300 will be non-working residents. Build-out of remaining RMOW developable residential lands, increases in the non-working resident population, permanent settlement of retired second-home owners and increases in the number of resident employees have been identified as contributing factors in this particular estimate.

The SLRD's regional population projections have been developed as a preliminary process in the development of a regional growth management strategy. Population projections have taken into account the RMOW's development growth cap and goal of housing 75% of their workforce within the municipality. A doubling of the current SLRD population to 68,153 in 2031 is projected based on a regional annual growth rate of approximately 1% in the near term to 2.8% per year by 2016 and then slowing to 2.2% per year by 2031. This potential population growth would require an additional housing need of 15,459 dwelling units regionally. In this assessment, it is projected that the RMOW would have an approximate resident population of a 22,000, Pemberton and vicinity 10,000 and Squamish 30,000 by 2031.

4.7 PLANNING INITIATIVES

Given Whistler's rapid pace of development and resort community characteristics, numerous planning initiatives have been developed to address the many issues unique to mountain resort communities. Some of these have been identified in the historical timeline (Table 4.1.). The following provides a brief summary of the plan or related organization and its current status.

4.7.1 Whistler Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan (OCP) contains and establishes the legal regulatory frameworks and detailed policies regarding land use, development, servicing and protection of the natural environment (Resort Municipality of Whistler, n.d.). It addresses thirteen policy areas and objectives including residential and commercial housing, resident housing, community facilities, heritage, parks and recreation and transportation. The OCP is congruent with the Municipality's Comprehensive Development Plan that acts as a guiding policy strategy for council regarding the development of the RMOW. Although there are no direct references to amenity migration in the OCP, it nonetheless deals with issues related to the phenomenon. Amendments can be made to this plan.

4.7.2 Comprehensive Development Plan

The Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) is a Council policy statement that describes and addresses the overall strategy for development and management of the RMOW (Resort Municipality of Whistler, n.d.). It articulates the basic goals for the kind of community and resort that Whistler is striving to be. Core components include strategies to maintain a high quality of life in the community, management of the local economy and continued provision of a high quality resort experience.

4.7.3 The Resort Community Monitoring Program

Since the Monitoring Program's inception in 1993, the RMOW has produced an annual monitoring report as part of its growth management strategy. This monitoring report identifies both qualitative and quantitative information in relation to the status of

economic, social and environmental conditions in the community. It was originally conceptualized from ideas regarding community monitoring in the community's Comprehensive Development Plan. Information from the report has been utilised by municipal staff and residents to monitor change, evaluate planning decisions and actions and identify potential community implications. Public access of this document is available through electronic or hard copy and community engagement occurs through a public open house and public presentation of the report to Council. The 2003/04 report was instrumental in developing various components of the Whistler 2020 Comprehensive Sustainability Plan.

4.7.4 Whistler Housing Authority

The Whistler Housing Authority is a wholly owned subsidiary of the RMOW, formed in 1997 to administer the development of employee restricted housing through the use of the Employee Housing Fund which is generated through commercial development charges (Whistler Housing Authority, n.d.). The WHA performs the combined functions of two other agencies: the Whistler Valley Housing Corporation a municipal corporation legally responsible for employee restricted housing developments and the Whistler Valley Housing Society, a non-profit organization that maintains legal eligibility for Canadian Mortgage and Housing funding initiatives. As identified on the WHA website, providing affordable rental or housing ownership options for RMOW resident employees has been the most challenging issue in the community in the last 15 years. In an effort to counteract the impact of market forces which have been driving the price of housing out of reach for the local resident population, the WHA has worked to create an inventory of price controlled units. The WHA believes that maintaining an inventory of price-controlled units is a superior way to counteract the impact of market forces on housing affordability and contribute toward meeting the stated goal of housing 75% Whistler's workforce in the community. In order to plan effectively for the provision of this housing, annual monitoring reports are conducted by the WHA to assess employee-housing needs.

4.7.5 Whistler Environmental Strategy (WES)

Developed in 1998, but not formerly adopted by Council until 2002 the Whistler Environmental Strategy has been utilised as a background document to inform the Municipality about various environmental sustainability principles, strategic directions and goals. The Municipality has also incorporated some initiatives presented in the WES into official municipal plans and budgets. These include the Community Energy Plan, Protected Areas Network strategy and watershed management plans.

4.7.6 The Natural Step (TNS)

The Natural Step Canada is part of an international non-profit research, education and advisory organization that uses a science-based, systems framework to help organizations, individuals and communities take meaningful steps toward sustainability. The mission of The Natural Step is to act as a catalyst to bring about systemic change by making fundamental principles of sustainability easier to understand and effective sustainability initiatives easier to implement (Natural Step Canada, n.d.). In March, 2000 the founder of the TNS visited Whistler and through his talks inspired a group of local organizations including the Municipality, Tourism Whistler, Whistler-Blackcomb and others to begin adopting the sustainability framework into their operational procedures. From these early adopters, a community wide initiative was then developed to form Whistler It's Our Nature - a non-profit organization charged with promoting and supporting more sustainable practices in the RMOW's businesses, schools and households. The TNS has been incorporated into various community plans and in particular, the Whistler 2020 Comprehensive Sustainability Plan (Resort Municipality of Whistler, n.d.).

4.7.7 Characteristics of Successful and Sustainable Destination Resort Communities Reports

“Characteristics of Successful Destination Resort Communities” (Design Workshop Inc. *et al.*) and “Characteristics of Sustainable Destination Communities” (Flint *et al.*) are two substantial planning documents prepared in 2002 by private firms for the RMOW and

intended for public discussion as part of a municipality-led effort to prepare a Comprehensive Sustainability Plan. The ultimate goal was to prepare Whistler - It's Our Future, a four phase program designed to put Whistler in charge of its own vision as a resort community. The first document identified five general trends affecting Whistler (all relate to amenity migration although the term is not used): changing demographics that point to fewer recreationists and more second-home and part-time residents; Whistler becoming more dependent on guest spending, real estate and retiree income; the community requiring more retail, maintenance and service workers; the tendency of resort communities to spread, thereby drawing nearby towns into their sphere of economic influence; and Whistler re-inventing itself to compete for resort visitors.

Key issues for all Western mountain resort communities, including Whistler were identified as follows: retention of full-time residents in light of high housing and land costs; maintenance of community vitality given increased number of second-homes; preservation of the natural environment; inevitability of development down-valley; and determination of the next stage of the community's evolution.

The challenges for Whistler in the Sustainability document included: Whistler remaining viable as both a resort and a community; providing adequate access to both housing and services for its population; managing of the municipality's environmental footprint; effectively planning and designing the community within development constraints; and meeting the changing health and social service needs of residents.

4.7.8 Whistler 2020 - Moving Toward a Sustainable Future: Comprehensive Sustainability Plan

Whistler 2020 is a three volume plan designed by the RMOW to guide the community over the next 15 years. Based on local values and the principles of sustainability espoused in The Natural Step Framework, this comprehensive plan was developed to provide a strategic planning approach which attempts to anticipate issues rather than plan in a more reactive manner (Resort Municipality of Whistler, 2005). The plan was developed by the larger community and is intended for use by the entire community. Considerable public

engagement practices were utilised in the development of the plan including open houses, workshops and task force meetings.

Volume I identifies Whistler's vision of itself as achieving social and environmental sustainability and a healthy economy within a thriving resort. It intends to continue to house 75% of the workforce in Whistler, offer recreational and cultural opportunities for visitors and residents, and meet the social health and learning needs of residents and visitors. Whistler aims to be a safe community and to foster cooperation between regional communities and the provincial government.

After the initial visioning process and the draft plan was developed, 16 community task force working groups were created to develop Volume II of the plan. This Volume includes sixteen strategy areas: 1) Resident housing strategy; 2) Resident affordability strategy; 3) Health and social strategy; 4) Recreation and leisure strategy; 5) Arts, culture and heritage strategy; 6) Learning strategy; 7) Built environment strategy; 8) Transportation strategy; 9) Energy strategy; 10) Materials and solid waste strategy; 11) Water strategy; 12) Visitor experience strategy; 13) Natural areas strategy; 14) Economic strategy; 15) Partnership strategy; and 16) Finance strategy. Monitoring targets will be developed to assess performance in these strategy areas. Volume III contains further background information for the 16 different strategy areas.

4.7.9 Squamish-Lillooet Regional Growth Strategy

The SLRD Growth Strategy is a long term planning project (20 year scope) fostered by the regional district to deal with growth management issues occurring within the southern portion of the district and economic recovery solutions for more northern areas under the SLRD's jurisdiction (Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, n.d.). It is identified as a "high-level" planning approach to identify and prioritize goals across the region that meet common environmental, social and economic objectives. Regional issues under examination will include land use, transportation, housing, economic development, social issues, ecological stewardship and regional services. The regional growth strategy is

being developed through ongoing consultations with all levels of government, the public and First Nations.

4.7.10 Sea-to-Sky Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP)

A regional Land and Resource Management Plan is currently being developed for the region under the direction of the British Columbian government's Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. The purpose of this plan is to develop a future vision for public land and resources (BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, n.d.). LMRPs are designed to offer broad strategic objectives that focus on maintaining and improving the well-being of communities, economies and ecosystems. The plan focuses on provincial lands outside of areas governed by regional and municipal jurisdictions as well as parks and protected areas. Some public consultations have occurred and the draft plan is under development.

...

The above description of various planning measures suggests that the RMOW and region have invested in planning their evolution. Researchers have also been interested in Whistler's development and associated planning processes. The following section reviews the research literature pertaining to Whistler.

4.8 RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER LITERATURE

Literature concerning the RMOW is quite diverse, including both academic and popular sources. It is on the increase, likely because there is generally greater awareness of growth pressures on mountain resort communities. Secondly, because the RMOW has developed a reputation as a successful resort and model for planning, there is considerable interest in the insights it might provide to other communities. Thirdly, the forthcoming Winter Olympics in 2010 have brought increased attention to Whistler and region.

4.8.1 Descriptive Overviews of Whistler

In literature related to tourism and mountain resort planning in Canada, there is often a description of the RMOW with information provided about its historical development, existing and future characteristics, current issues, and planning measures instituted in the resort's development. For example, in Callaway's (1988) study of *Planning Integrated Resort Communities* within mountain regions, the RMOW was presented as the best example of the evolution of a full scale resort community, with integration both internally and externally within British Columbia's socio-economic network. He identified the RMOW's development as unique because of its geography, the village focus, types of development techniques employed, administration structures and the resulting project.

Inskeep (1991) offered a brief overview of the historical development of Whistler from a planning and development perspective. He highlighted the uniqueness of Whistler's official designation as a resort municipality (Resort Municipality of Whistler Act 1975) and identified the policy objectives of its first Official Community Plan in 1976. These were resource-based and oriented toward controlling development. A primary concept of the community plan was the development of a compact integrated town or village centre to unify otherwise sprawling developments within the valley. Inskeep also noted the Whistler Resort Association which was developed in 1978 to market Whistler as a four-season international destination. All enterprises in the Village and other designated areas were legally required to join this association. Inskeep concluded that Whistler had been highly successful in becoming a year round destination while continuing to provide a liveable community for residents. He did not appear to differentiate among types of residents or comment on whether employees were able to find adequate housing within the RMOW.

Hudson (2003) provided a case study of the RMOW, with special attention given to the community's economic success in maintaining itself primarily as a winter sport destination. He attributed a large part of the RMOW's success to the destination marketing activities of Tourism Whistler, formerly the Whistler Resort Association. He noted Tourism Whistler's intentions to build on past successes and to focus on

developing the year round success of the resort. Among the various marketing challenges facing Whistler such as continued competition for a limited skier base and a poor British Columbia economy, he viewed the Olympic Games as potentially endangering the RMOW's existing character.

4.8.2 Exploring Whistler's Resort/Community Dynamic

Williamson (1991) raised the question of which came first, the resort or the community? In his paper presented at the Vail Conference on Mountain Resort Development, he identified three factors that he believed greatly affected community development in Whistler. These were: 1) a very disjointed and stratified resort population, with various types of "locals" holding diverse opinions on what Whistler should be; 2) the extreme growth rate that Whistler experienced in the last decade (1980s) and the social implications of a boom town economy; and 3) the struggle of being a "community/resort" and fulfilling the interests of both the residents and the resort. Although Williamson does not directly refer to amenity migration, he alludes to issues which are discussed in amenity migration literature.

He also noted that the general public had difficulty assessing whether more bed units were needed and observed that the RMOW should have started keeping a comprehensive resource inventory much earlier. He concluded that "the whole concept of resort planning is a response to the inadequacies of letting the market dictate growth" (p.24). It may be that corporate developers' sense of what they wish to sell, that is, their brand determines the direction of resort planning.

Gill (1991) reported on the first phase of a study examining the nature and dynamics of community in a resort setting. She presented views of Whistler residents on the proposed direction of future development. Through a series of 18 living room meetings, 175 residents completed questionnaires regarding planning related issues in the community and discussed and ranked the top five priorities in the community. These were environmental concerns, provision of community facilities, affordable housing, educational concerns, and desired level of growth. She noted that the rate of growth and

change was particularly pressing and necessitated that resort developers be sensitive to the limits of growth. Further, residents felt a sense of control over decision-making. This study is important because it provided an opportunity for the expression of residents' views.

In a major contribution to growth theory as applied to resort development, Gill (2000) examines the prominence of the “growth machine” for much of Whistler’s history. Through two questionnaire surveys of residents and categorization of mayors and councillors in terms of pro-community or pro-development attitudes, Gill identified the first sign of residents’ concern about growth in the late 1980s. By 1990 the growing number of residents, sparked by the Association of Whistler Area Residents for the Environment (AWARE), began to contest the priorities of resort growth and to demand more community services. Changing demographics related to Whistler emerging as a year-round resort meant that more families with children expressed a desire for more affordable housing, recreation and community services. Women showed stronger support for community and environmental issues; men showed slightly higher support for recreational and tourism development.

In 1994 the RMOW Council committed to a growth management approach and the institution of a comprehensive resort and community monitoring system collecting data on economic, environmental and social indicators. The more recent priority given to growth management meant that the developers needed to engage with locals in new forms of coalitions in order to pursue their respective goals, keeping issues of sustainability at the forefront of planning. Gill’s analysis of the varying sentiments of home owners and renters, residents for less or more than 5 years, and men and women is noteworthy because it provides insights into the varying forces that influence the evolution of this mountain ski resort community and which may have parallels in other mountain communities experiencing growth.

4.8.3 Growth Management in Whistler

In studying growth management options for ski resort development in Squamish, BC, Hainsworth (1996) undertook a case study of the RMOW because of its regional proximity, success as a resort and perceived excellence in tourism growth management planning. He outlined Whistler's historical development with a focus on planning related events and strategies. He then discussed growth management planning at Whistler, an approach adopted in 1987. In his useful analysis, he identified the following as key components of growth management planning in the RMOW: the RMOW Act; the Whistler Resort Association; comprehensive planning; development of build out limits; development of design guidelines; comprehensive community monitoring and evaluation programs; community facility provisioning; development of housing strategies; development of community transportation strategies; growth controls through water supply management; and finally, public participation practices.

4.8.4 Provision of Affordable Housing in Whistler

The provision of adequate affordable resident and employee housing is one of the most serious planning issues in Whistler. It has received considerable media and academic attention. For example, Wake (2003) reported on the results of a working group seminar that addressed the erosion of suitable and affordable housing for the resident workforce in Whistler. He noted that the impact of housing on the natural environment must be carefully measured and not negatively affect the area's natural habitat. He identified the important role of The Whistler Housing Authority in establishing and managing the inventory of market and restricted housing available to employees in the resort for rent or purchase.

Gill (2005), in her presentation on "Affordable Housing Provision in Mountain Resorts" at the Smithers Symposium on Mountain Community Development, noted that many mountain resorts have seen dramatic social and environmental change as a result of amenity migration. Further, she stated that the provision of adequate affordable housing was a common problem in these communities with no easy solutions. She focused on

Whistler and identified economic (1975-89), community (1990-onward), and environmental (1990s) imperatives related to growth during these various eras. She viewed (1990-2002) as a growth management era, with community voice more evident regarding lack of community facilities, affordable housing, rapid growth and environmental quality. She characterized the period from 2002 onward as one where ideas of sustainability were incorporated more widely throughout the community, that is, through the adoption of The Natural Step Framework.

In addressing the problem of affordable housing, Gill (2005) presented a detailed commentary on bed units as measures of development. Her analysis of the positive and negative implications of using bed units as a growth measurement tool is useful because it reveals how the use of bed units can have unintended consequences. The bed unit is a relatively easy tool to use conceptually; the bed cap or limit to growth can be utilised for political leveraging in negotiations for the provision of community and resort amenities. However, she attributed the RMOW's limit to growth or bed cap as being responsible for artificially creating housing demand which has led to increased housing costs within the municipality. She also indicated that, in some instances, the bed cap has interfered with long term planning. Gill reported that affordable housing has become an even bigger concern than environment for RMOW residents. She concluded that there was a greater need for corporate involvement in affordable housing provision.

The popular media has echoed researchers' concerns about affordable housing in Whistler (Carmichael, 2005; Mallet, 2004). Some Whistler employees have even resorted to squatting in the woods on the periphery of the Village.

Hettinger (2005), another researcher concerned with housing, conducted a series of guided semi-structured interviews with five key informants in the community as well as examining census data and various community publications. Interview data affirmed the importance of tourism to Whistler's economy. His housing market analysis revealed that externalities - the demand for second-homes, topographical constraints, growth management regulations, and land use and zoning regulations have led to housing market

failure. He concluded from the census data community reports that: 1) housing was unaffordable for the average Whistler resident; and 2) that the RMOW had significantly more residents living in unaffordable housing than the rest of the province or Canada. His interview data suggested that local residents were being displaced by second-home buyers.

Hettinger (2005) described municipal and provincial initiatives that were undertaken during the RMOW's development to address housing issues. These included: areas being reserved specifically for housing; a warm bed policy for the Village centre and surrounding areas; the development of a land bank for housing and the development of an impact fee assessed to commercial developers who did not develop sufficient housing for their planned workforce. He noted the development of the first land bank and resident restricted housing development in 1980. Through the Whistler Housing Authority, established in 1997 as the successor to the Whistler Housing Society and the W.V. Housing Corporation, Whistler proceeded with public development and management of a resident restricted housing stock in the community. Deed restrictions and price caps were utilised to control affordability of these units. Another housing intervention included incentives for private development of affordable housing units. Further, Hettinger identified political support, funding and active planning for resident housing as critical to the success of the community as a tourism destination. Despite the RMOW's efforts to address the housing situation, Hettinger concluded that housing market failure has occurred in Whistler and that the RMOW's housing interventions need to be continuously monitored as the community evolves.

The studies that focus on housing provide a serious challenge to the image of the RMOW as a highly liveable community.

4.9 SUMMARY

This chapter first locates the RMOW within its historical context and reveals unresolved territorial issues from the perspective of the First Nations. The history of Western settlement beginning in the late 1800s was characterized by a series of migrants

envisioning what they might realize from an area rich in natural resources and amenities. The draw of fishing, hiking, and spectacular scenery led to the settlement and the eventual development of skiing on two world class mountains. By 1960 there were dreams of winning the Winter Olympic Games, a goal not realized until 2003 when Vancouver/Whistler won the bid for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. However, in 1965 when development of skiing began on Whistler Mountain, the resort experienced its first surge of housing development and sales at prices considered somewhat astonishing. This was a foretaste of the “growth is good” mentality that dominated for the next 40 years.

At the same time, however, there was increasing awareness on the part of the RMOW and other sectors of the population that growth could not just continue without regard for the physical and social environment portrayed in the section on existing conditions. To offset degradation of natural resources, to provide a range of basic community services and to plan effectively to maintain the character of the place, the RMOW embarked on numerous planning exercises and ventures. These are described briefly in this chapter in terms of their goals and activities. The Whistler Housing Authority is important as it is expected to deal with the problem of employee housing, a serious issue for the municipality for the past 15 years. The latest plan, Whistler 2020 captures the ideals of sustainability with a comprehensive review of important features of the desired community, and the strategies and actions needed to achieve its vision. Because of the RMOW’s investment in planning, it has become known as a leader with expertise of benefit to other mountain resort communities that are in earlier stages of development and/or experiencing unchecked growth. What makes the RMOW stand out with respect to planning is worthy of further exploration.

Not surprisingly, researchers have focused on the RMOW often utilizing a case study, and occasionally providing the views of community members or other stakeholders with respect to issues of concern. Affordable housing and environmental concerns have competed for the most attention. These are issues that may be understood in terms of the rapid growth that has occurred in the RMOW. Interestingly, the concept of amenity migration and related ideas of causes, characteristics of migrants and consequences of

amenity migration were not directly evident in the Whistler specific research except in Gill's work. Nor was the concept found in the considerable number of the RMOW's planning documents. However, the manifestations of amenity migration were discussed. The absence of this conceptualization of amenity migration warrants further exploration, given that the concept is appearing more frequently in the mountain resort planning literature and the effects are being identified as having significant consequences.

Perhaps the concept of "amenity migration" is too recent, having only been developed in 1985. Is the omission simply due to lack of familiarity on the part of the planners and other personnel engaged in the various planning processes? Is use of the term "amenity migrants" a form of labeling that might be aversive to some? Are there connotations to the term that some individuals find displeasing? Is there a sense that the issues pertaining to growth are well enough understood with reference to second-home ownership and affordable housing concerns? Is there no need to further expand the conceptual framework? Are the planning implications of amenity migration sufficiently developed so that planners and others can appreciate their importance? Are the issues related to amenity migration sufficiently addressed so that there is minimal need for understanding the nature of amenity migration?

This chapter's detailed exposition of characteristics and conditions pertaining to the RMOW and region as well as the Whistler specific literature results in the identification of a number of broad themes that guided the development of the questions asked of the interviewees. These themes include:

- The relationship of First Nations to the RMOW and region;
- Natural and built amenities;
- Affordable housing;
- Community health and social considerations;
- Planning initiatives;
- The 2010 Winter Olympics; and
- Future challenges.

The next chapter presents the findings from the interviews as well as discussion of their implications.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews organized by themes as they emerged from an analysis of the interviews. Quotations from interviewees are included to illustrate particular issues. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings.

5.0 PARTICIPANT BACKGROUNDS

As noted previously, an attempt was made to interview a wide range of participants with expertise related to the phenomenon of amenity migration, mountain resort development and the RMOW and surrounding region. Participants were selected to present a varied spectrum of interests as well as those who had opportunity to influence planning practices and decision making in the RMOW and region. In their professional roles, participants included former and current local politicians, municipal and regional planners, First Nations representatives, key industry spokespersons, real estate professionals, mountain historians, mountain resort designers and academics. Of the sixteen participants, twelve resided in the region. The majority of these twelve participants were employed in the RMOW with some living in the communities of Pemberton and Squamish. Of the sixteen participants, thirteen were male and three female, with an approximate age range between 30 to 65 years. In addition to participants' direct knowledge or expertise of the RMOW and region, many of those interviewed had previously lived in other North American mountain locales and been involved in professional capacities in those communities.

5.1 CONCEPTUALIZING AMENITY MIGRATION

A major research goal of this thesis was to identify key stakeholders' familiarity with the concept of amenity migration. It was of particular interest to the researcher to discover whether or not the concept of amenity migration was being used in the planning and decision making vernacular and planning strategies in a municipality (RMOW) and region that clearly had experienced what scholars and researchers would identify as amenity migration. Underlying questions pertaining to the utility of the concept of amenity migration guided this avenue of the research investigation.

5.1.1 Familiarity with the Concept of Amenity Migration

Respondents were equally divided in terms of their familiarity with the term. Not surprisingly, three academics were among those familiar with the concept; they were also not residents of the RMOW or region. Of the thirteen non-academics, five respondents indicated being familiar with the term, with two of them mentioning that they first learned of the term in presentations by Laurence Moss (the pioneering “amenity migration” researcher) at the Sustainable Mountain Communities Conference (SUSTCOM) held in Banff, AB, 2003. Of the eight respondents who indicated that they were not previously familiar with the concept, all grasped the idea of amenity migration quite easily, with some indicating they were aware of various effects. A couple noted that these effects had not previously been associated with the concept of amenity migration. One planner commented that the concept seemed to be more recognized in the academic sphere of planning and much less so in the professional or “hands-on” component of the discipline.

5.1.2. Interviewees’ Definitions of Amenity Migration

In contacting research participants primarily by email and also in the consent forms, the researcher provided the purpose of the study and a brief definition of amenity migration. This definition was based on Moss’ conceptualization of amenity migration as: “the significant contemporary societal phenomenon of large numbers of people moving to places perceived as having superior natural environment and/or distinct culture - amenity attributes” (Glorioso, 2000, p.276). Provision of this preliminary information to all interviewees resulted in everyone offering a definition, even those who had indicated that they were previously unfamiliar with the concept of amenity migration. Except for the academics, few cited a textbook style definition of the term. For example, a politician commented that amenity migration involved “People investing a chunk of their time in a community.” Two planners offered similar definitions “It’s where people move to an area where people perceive there to be natural amenities as opposed to shopping malls etc.” and “I think it means people who are moving to a place where there are tremendous

recreational and natural amenities that draw them there, rather than created amenities that a city often has (jobs, etc).”

Most interviewees focused on the natural physical amenities and/or built recreational amenities as being the primary attributes which draw persons to migrate rather than cultural attributes of place. A few interviewees made reference to amenity migrants as “lifestyle retirees” and “weekenders.” One respondent mentioned the possible negative connotation of the term: “Amenity migration sounds like it is some hedonistic activity that doesn’t have great social value.”

There was some variation among interviewees with respect to the inclusion of second-home owners in the definition of amenity migration. While some included second-home owners, others did not mention them in their definitions. One interviewee’s definition specifically omitted second-home owners. The rationale provided was that amenity migrants within the BC hinterland were usually primary residents who were generally welcomed to the community. In this person’s view, second-home owners tended to be located in gateway and resort communities. Whereas economic benefits might accrue to these communities, second-home owners, because of the duration of their stay, were not seen as contributing to the development of a community. This interviewee’s perspective was that there were different types of amenity migrants and it was important to differentiate among them for research purposes.

5. 2 CHARACTERISTICS OF AMENITY MIGRANTS TO THE RMOW AND REGION

In identifying the characteristics of amenity migrants in the RMOW and region, a number of respondents offered historical perspectives on the RMOW’s development with respect to people migrating to or purchasing private real estate in the community. Many noted that historically much of the settlement in Whistler was related to the recreational opportunities afforded in the area. One interviewee elaborated that there has been a 35 year progression of amenity migration in Whistler, with the characteristics of amenity migrants changing over time. The interviewee identified the 1970s and 1980s as a period

in Whistler when a majority of the people investing in private real estate were not necessarily extremely affluent and often purchased modestly sized cabins or secondary suites. A great number of people were attracted to the idea of what was happening in Whistler in the early 1980s and invested in property. These earlier amenity migrants were often characterized as being predominantly Vancouverites who were involved or “tuned in” to many of the RMOW’s issues and the nature of the community. Upon retirement, many of these people moved permanently to the community.

The interviewee noted, however, that in the 1990s a very different type of investor began to emerge who was often very wealthy and much more internationally based. This investment trend was also mentioned by other participants who were long-time residents. One participant commented “In years prior, it [referring to the property investment in the RMOW] wasn’t seen as amenity migration. It was more just that people wanted to own recreational property in the mountains. It was not seen as a ‘lifestyle’ type move or a permanent move.” Another participant involved in regional planning noted that amenity migration today had become a driving force in the entire Sea to Sky corridor.

With respect to characteristics, interviewees presented a number of perspectives. Generally, amenity migrants were seen as affluent, that is, with above average incomes and education and tending to reflect urban values and mindsets. Occasionally, more recent amenity migrants were described as having less understanding of the nature of Whistler, its “sense of place” and various community values. Baby boomers were seen to comprise a significant portion of current amenity migrants to the RMOW and region. Amenity migrants were perceived as having made their money elsewhere, and not being dependent on the tourism industry in Whistler for their economic well being. They were often seen as arriving in Whistler already well connected to other key people. One interviewee stated that “I think there is a large degree of highly educated urban people that want to come to live here. I don’t think that they would move to other small towns.”

In addition to those amenity migrants identified as more affluent, a second group of people moving to the RMOW and surrounding region were identified as individuals who

were migrating not necessarily for the amenities, but for economic incentives (employment opportunities). Further, some amenity migrants were characterized as individuals who migrated in order to make a “lifestyle change,” often taking significant salary reductions and abandoning professional careers to sustain this improved “quality of life” related migration.

The more affluent and highly educated group of amenity migrants were often characterized as second-home owners by interviewees. Some interviewees mentioned that this group was often passionate about their second-homes and generally wished to build the maximum house size allowable. One interviewee characterized this group as OPLAL’s (older people leading active lives).

A diversity of participant views was apparent regarding various community related characteristics of amenity migrants. These views entailed positive attributes of amenity migrants as having the potential time and money to be philanthropic within the community, being very invested about issues of concern to them, and having the education and skills to be innovative about community matters. In contrast, some amenity migrants were seen as having narrow self interests, an abundance of financial resources to advance their interests, and lack of engagement with community concerns due to the limited time actually spent residing in the community.

The following table summarizes the perceptions of interviewees regarding the characteristics of amenity migrants to the RMOW and region. Table 5.1 is divided into two temporal periods that were identified by most interviewees as periods when the characteristics differed considerably. Interviewees did not differentiate amenity migrants into types in the first period, but saw them primarily as Vancouverites seeking recreational experiences. In the more recent period, interviewees differentiated these types of amenity migrants, with Type I the most numerous and quite distinct from the others. Type I amenity migrants were usually affluent and often internationally based, whereas Type II wished to work in Whistler. Type III amenity migrants were also drawn

to Whistler, but they were not necessarily affluent nor primarily focused on employment opportunities, but rather on a change in their overall quality of life.

Table 5.1

Summary of Perceived Characteristics of Amenity Migrants

Period	Interviewee Identified Characteristics
1970s - 1980s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreationally motivated; • Not necessarily affluent; • Small cabin or secondary suite owners; • Predominantly Vancouverites; • Aware and involved in community issues; • Many ultimately retiring to the RMOW.
1990s - 2006	<p><u>Type I</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affluent; money made elsewhere; not dependent on local tourism industry; • Often internationally based; • Often arriving “well connected” to key people; • Usually second-home owners; keen to own recreational properties; • Passionate about their homes, and eager to build maximum size allowable; • Predominantly “Baby boomers”; • Well educated, tending to reflect urban values and mindsets; • Less “tuned in” to community issues and values; • Some perceived to have time and money to be philanthropic, invested in issues of concern, with education and skills to be innovative; • Others perceived as having narrow self interests, abundant financial resources to advance interests, and lack of engagement with community concerns because of limited time spent in community. <p><u>Type II</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving primarily for economic reasons i.e. employment seeking. <p><u>Type III</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking improved “quality of life”; • Often leaving professional careers, and accepting salary reductions.

5.3 EFFECTS OF AMENITY MIGRATION

As identified in the literature, the effects of amenity migration are varied, multiple and often interactive. The effects attributed to amenity migration are presented in four

sections, beginning with general perspectives, followed by the First Nations' experience, effects in the RMOW and lastly, effects within the region. Although interviewees were asked to comment generally about effects, they predominantly identified negative consequences.

5.3.1 General Perspectives on Effects of Amenity Migration

The significance of the myriad of effects of amenity migration was passionately presented by a few interviewees as an encompassing vision of what was transpiring in many North American mountain locales. Their concern with the transformation of the mountain west was captured in the following words:

When you're talking about amenity migration, you're talking about a much, much larger intervention on place and culture. Amenity migration is way more than a small movement; it is affecting the entire West. The West's unique character is being consumed and lost and the people who are losing it have no means for articulating what they are losing; and the people who are consuming it, only have the most superficial notions of what they want to get from these places.

Localised "sense of place" is being replaced by homogenized values and perceptions. When this happens you lose the unique diversity and character of localness.

One interviewee indicated that major resort communities such as Whistler, Banff and Canmore, AB had a fair understanding of the effects of amenity migration, although they may not have used the term in their community discourse or planning practices. In contrast, the interviewee noted that more rural communities had much less understanding of the potential effects of amenity migration and often, even fewer resources to plan proactively to counter negative outcomes.

Two other comments were that it was probably easier to identify the effects related to more affluent amenity migrants, than effects pertaining to those less well off. The participant stated that as a planner, one was more likely to be exposed to negative as opposed to positive effects associated with the phenomenon. Another interviewee identified a potentially problematic effect of amenity migration in mountain communities that rely on tourism based economies: a paradigm shift by local service workers away

from engagement with tourism and recreation related employment to the second-home sector.

Although the interviews focused on the effects of amenity migration to Whistler, interviewees occasionally offered their perceptions of the effects of amenity migration throughout the mountain west. The major general concern pertained to the rapid and pervasive transformation of the mountain west due to an influx of investment and subsequent private property development, usually in the form resorts and second homes. Table 5.2 summarizes interviewees' general perspectives and observations regarding amenity migration.

Table 5.2

Summary of General Perspectives on Amenity Migration

General Perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There has been ongoing erosion of the mountain west's unique character due to increased investment, development and population growth;• A localised "sense of place" in mountain communities has been replaced by homogenized values of mainstream North America with its emphasis on consumerism, reliance on retail brand names, and availability of services;• Community members may have less understanding of amenity migration in more rural mountain communities as opposed to major mountain resorts;• More rural mountain communities have fewer planning resources to address effects associated with amenity migration;• Planners likely find it easier to identify effects related to more affluent amenity migrants due to their visibility;• Planners are likely more exposed to the negative effects of amenity migration.

5.3.2 The First Nations' Experience

The First Nations were the first peoples to experience an influx of foreigners into their territories. Their experience of amenity migration differs significantly from that reported by other interviewees. This section presents the experiences of the Lil'wat First Nations. The views and experiences of the Squamish First Nations are not represented in this

section as the researcher was unable to interview representatives from this group despite multiple attempts to include them.

In response to the question about the effects of amenity migration, the Lil'wat First Nations offered a historical perspective on the Lil'wat connection to the region, beginning with their story of the Lil'wat presence in the region for generations. They cited the creation story as traveling through the land including the present day Whistler valley area and stated that physical markers remained on the land, thereby confirming the long-time Lil'wat presence in the region. In contrast, the Lil'wat had noted that in some of the RMOW's promotional material, the First Nations were portrayed historically as using the Whistler valley in a transitory fashion. The Lil'wat also acknowledged an historical overlap with the Squamish Nations in various parts of the territory. More recent events such as the Gold Rush, the completion of a paved road (Highway 99) to Whistler, residential schools in the 1960s and the upcoming Winter Olympics were identified as having a significant impact on the Lil'wat culture and way of life.

From the Lil'wat perspective, the rapid development of Whistler as a ski resort community resulted in a fundamental break in the Lil'wat connection with the area:

The traditional territory encompasses a great deal of the region, including: south of Whistler, the Whistler valley, the Callaghan Valley and Garibaldi Provincial Park. It is an asserted territory; there is a lot of historical use. If you look at Whistler it is very "new," there were only a few settlers that lived there. Many of the Lil'wat did live around the lakes (referring to the lakes in the Whistler valley) and there were a lot of plants that flourished near the lakes which drew many people to the area in the summer, and the mountainous areas were good for hunting goat and other animals. From a community perspective their tie to that region is really recent, but there is kind of a severing of that tie in recent memory. Basically, the start of the ski hill in Whistler is the start of the decline of the connection to the land in that area. It is not a case of the law purposely excluding the Lil'wat from using the land; it is more of a gradual push out, where people start feeling uncomfortable doing things they have traditionally done in the area because there are too many other people around. Then you start to see a lot of development occurring really rapidly and no real benefit to the community (Lil'wat First Nation). It had almost become a no go zone, an outright push out.

Rapid development in the Pemberton Valley in the past decade was seen as having similar negative effects to those noted above. A specific impact mentioned was the development of a sub-division which was built adjacent to one of their reserves, essentially cutting off access to an area where berries with cultural significance were recently picked. It was noted that many animal trails in the region had been appropriated by an influx of newcomers for recreational purposes such as mountain biking. This appropriation had been problematic for Lil'wat people wishing to hunt deer in areas that were now being used by others for these non-traditional uses. Conflicts among users had arisen and negatively affected the Lil'wat people's ability to hunt safely in these locales.

The Lil'wat identified the increased development in Pemberton within the past decade as a "spillover" effect from Whistler. The essence of this "spillover" or increased development in the Pemberton Valley was attributed to the exorbitant cost of housing in the RMOW. It was indicated that the RMOW's high cost of housing led many individuals to move to Pemberton because they could not afford to purchase property in Whistler.

Positive effects associated with amenity migration and the development of Whistler were also noted. These included better access to a wide variety of services regionally and improved opportunity for community members to participate in recreational activities, especially Lil'wat children and youth. Some examples were the development of a First Nations' snowboard team and recreational delivery in Pemberton by the RMOW's recreation department. Increased employment opportunities in the RMOW for Lil'wat community members were also mentioned. However, it was noted that not all jobs offered in the RMOW were compatible with First Nations members.

There were next to no comments made on the effects of amenity migration on First Nations by non-aboriginal research participants. However, there were expressions of positive regard for the First Nations and hopes expressed for the continued development of mutually beneficial partnerships.

The Lil'wat First Nations' experience with the effects of amenity migration is summarized in the table that follows.

Table 5.3

Summary of Effects of Amenity Migration on the Lil'wat First Nations

Domains	Effects
Social	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of increased development throughout the region, the Lil'wat have better access to a wide variety of services; • Increased development of amenities in the RMOW, in particular sports and recreational facilities including the ski hills and recreation centre have improved opportunities, especially for children and youth to participate in recreational activities. <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severing of the connection of the Lil'wat people to the land, first in the Whistler valley and more recently in the Pemberton Valley, has occurred because of the increase in all forms of development, resulting in continuous "pushing out" of Lil'wat people.
Economic	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in Whistler and the region has resulted in increased regional employment opportunities, in particular in the service sector and construction; • Because of increased development, more business partnership opportunities have evolved between the Lil'wat Nation and various public, private and other First Nation groups throughout the region. <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lil'wat Nation have been unable to use traditional lands for food gathering and hunting either because of lack of access to these lands and/or use of the land for recreational purposes by amenity migrants (and tourists); • Down-valley growth in Pemberton has occurred as a result of rising housing costs in the RMOW.
Environmental	<p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal trails have been appropriated for recreational use by non-aboriginals; • Subdivision development in the RMOW and region has fragmented the land and impeded access of Lil'wat community members to traditional lands.

5.3.3 Effects of Amenity Migration on the Resort Municipality of Whistler

Interviewees commented readily about the range of impacts of amenity migration on Whistler. Amenity migration was seen as central to Whistler's success as a resort community, but also as presenting numerous challenges. All interviewees emphasized housing and in particular, housing and affordability as being the most significant effect related to the phenomenon. One planner, commenting on the issue of housing affordability, stated: "All of the other effects associated with the phenomenon are consequences of affordability."

Amenity migration was identified by some participants as being good for the economy, generating considerable employment opportunities in the municipality, including construction related to home building. It was also noted that amenity migrants made many positive contributions to the community as many possessed great entrepreneurial skills. Two respondents commented on the positive effects accruing to full time residents and the community itself because of the significant number of amenity migrants in Whistler who were second-home owners and often absent in the community. One interviewee believed that full time residents were able to have considerable access to the RMOW's many recreational amenities, in part because the number of residents actually living permanently in the RMOW was smaller than officially recorded. Noting that most communities of the RMOW's size did not have nearly as many amenities, the interviewee offered the following response regarding the effect of having many absentee property owners:

It's a win/win situation. You've got large homes paying massive amounts of taxes and they never flush the toilets, they don't put any kids in the schools, they seldom drive on the roads, they put no impact.

This positive outlook regarding the frequent absence of many amenity migrants was not shared by many interviewees; even this interviewee went on to identify a number of problematic effects associated with absentee amenity migrants.

With respect to the lack of affordable housing in Whistler, the point was repeatedly made that as demand for housing increased within the municipality, with a limited supply or even as the result of a perception of a limited supply because of municipally imposed growth controls, prices increased. Interviewees suggested the following effects ensued:

- Local resident inability to afford purchasing homes;
- Locals forced to the periphery;
- Existing single family residences being redeveloped or sold for prices out of reach of locals;
- Housing stock often purchased by second-home owners, resulting in a loss for residential employees;
- Local residents “cashing out” and selling their homes for a variety of reasons such as property taxes becoming too great or out of desire or need to access the considerable equity accrued on their homes as a result of rising housing costs;
- Private sector owned employee resident housing being sold;
- Secondary suites in new homes ceasing to be built as most new investors looked to build maximum allowable house sizes;
- Increased transportation pressures linked to a commuting workforce;
- A decrease in the resident workforce living in the RMOW from approximately 80% to 76%;
- Senior citizens in the RMOW becoming land rich, but lacking opportunities to buy smaller, less expensive homes;
- Second-home owners retiring to Whistler, thereby lessening the likelihood of their dwellings being rented to local employees.

Several social consequences were consistently identified by interviewees as deriving from amenity migration. The first of these was captured by their use of the phrase “dark neighbourhoods.” This phrase was often used to describe neighbourhoods which were lacking full time residents due to second-home owners’ absence. The designations of “cold” and “warm” beds were also occasionally used by interviewees, but more often in reference to visitor numbers and hotel vacancy rates. One interviewee mentioned the difficulty in building a “sense of community” when a large proportion of one’s neighbourhood was perpetually absent. Another mentioned the less desirable aspects of raising children in a “dark neighbourhood.” One interviewee mentioned a related concern pertaining to the disruptive activities associated with second-homes being rented as full scale tourist accommodations (now rectified by zoning).

Effects of amenity migration on population movements were also commonly identified. These included interviewees mentioning the transitory nature of the community, a perceived fairly consistent “turnover” of all residents, and the loss of many long-time residents who had left to other more “affordable” locales. Loss of considerable social capital was identified as a result of long-time residents leaving the RMOW.

The effects of amenity migration on two demographic groups were also noted. First, there was the loss of some senior citizens in the community due to a lack of housing opportunities for downsizing in the RMOW and the current absence of any assisted living facilities in the RMOW. It was noted that the matter of providing adequate housing and support services for an ageing population would become considerably more prevalent in the upcoming 10 to 20 years as a significant portion of the community’s baby boomers began to reach an elderly age cohort. Secondly, the RMOW was seen as not attracting young families because of the lack of affordable housing. Further, some younger people advancing in their careers were identified as leaving the RMOW because they could not afford housing. Similarly, it was noted that there were difficulties in attracting and retaining middle managers.

One interviewee mentioned another labour related effect pertaining to the RMOW’s firefighters who formed a union in order to resist being required to live within the municipality. Again, housing costs were the problematic factor.

Finally a number of interviewees commented on the changing social characteristics within the RMOW. These included a disappearance of the middle class as many residents “cash out,” growing socio-economic polarization of the community, and increasing social alienation between service workers and Whistler’s upper strata. One interviewee stated:

We haven’t really seen it yet, but as the so called “pioneering” middle class in Whistler reaches retirement age and sells their primary asset, their principal residence, because many of us will not be able to retain that real estate in our retirement years or we will need to use the equity from the home for the purposes of retirement, we won’t see people like us buy into these properties.

Overall, interviewees' commentary focused on the social consequences of amenity migration to the RMOW. Although not as explicit, their remarks also showed awareness of environmental considerations.

A summary of interviewees' perceptions of effects of amenity migration in the RMOW is presented in the following table.

Table 5.4

Summary of Effects of Amenity Migration on the RMOW

Domains	Effects
Social	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absentee second-home owners while expecting recreational and other facilities nonetheless make minimal use, thereby permitting greater access by full time residents. <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because of lack of affordable housing, local residents are forced to peripheral or "down-valley" communities, resulting in a loss of social capital; • High housing and other costs result in a smaller resident workforce living in the RMOW; • Because of high housing and other costs, there is difficulty in attracting and retaining young families; • With increasing numbers of affluent amenity migrants to the RMOW and a labour force to serve their needs, the middle class is less able to access housing and services and is gradually disappearing; • Because of the increasingly visible gaps between those who have resources of all kinds and those who are of more limited means, there is increased social alienation between RMOW service workers and upper classes; • Because of the cost and lack of smaller homes, senior citizens unable to downsize homes, limiting their ability to age in place; • Due to absentee owners, some neighbourhoods are increasingly deserted and "dark," with resulting difficulties for residents to develop a "sense of community" and belonging; • The lack of other families in "dark" neighbourhoods leads to isolated families who have concerns about their children growing up without access to friends and school mates; • Disruption to neighbourhoods has occurred when second-homes have been rented as "tourist homes." Disruption is due to increased traffic, provision of tourist support services (for example, catering and cleaning services), noise levels and careless tourist behaviour such as littering.

<p>Economic</p>	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity migrants, because of their investment in properties, their consumption of goods and services and payment of property taxes are central to the success of the resort community; • The presence of amenity migrants generates considerable employment opportunities, in particular, in construction and home building; • Because of the entrepreneurial skills of amenity migrants, they may become involved in business ventures within the community; • Because of amenity migrants' significant contribution to taxes, it is possible for the community to provide more community services that provide a benefit to all community residents. <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rising housing costs due to high demand and a scarcity of locations creates unaffordable housing conditions for local residents, many of whom comprise a needed labour force; • Local residents, because of higher living costs and changing community character, may "cash out," that is, take advantage of the rising housing costs, thereby contributing to escalating housing costs; often these longtime residents move to other less mature or isolated mountain settings • Given the scarcity of various types of housing, the private sector sells its employee housing, resulting in less affordable housing within the community; • In new homes, many owners are not interested in managing or developing secondary suites and choose to buy out of this option, thereby lessening the supply of affordable housing; • With more home owners retiring to the RMOW there are fewer second home rental opportunities for local residents; • Because of high housing costs, there is increased difficulty in attracting and retaining middle managers/young professionals.
<p>Environmental</p>	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No positive environmental impacts of amenity migration were identified. <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is ongoing degradation of the natural environment by increased land use and continual development; • The development of increasingly larger "trophy" homes results in the consumption of considerable resources; • With increased development the region surrounding the RMOW is experiencing rural sprawl; • Because many in the workforce commute from neighbouring areas, there are increased transportation pressures resulting in environmental degradation.

5.3.4 Regional Effects of Amenity Migration

Interviewees consistently identified the high cost of housing within the RMOW as a primary motivating force resulting in individuals and in particular, RMOW employees choosing or out of necessity moving to surrounding areas within the region. The communities of Squamish (approx. 54 km to the south) and Pemberton (approx. 32 km to the north) were identified as the primary areas where this “spillover” growth was occurring. This effect was largely identified as “down-valley” growth or “down-valley” syndrome by respondents. Some referred to this phenomenon of out-migration from the RMOW as “resident leakage.” The out-migration of former Whistler residents to other peripheral areas within the Sea to Sky corridor was viewed negatively by most interviewees. Participants cited the out-migration of people from Whistler as a loss of social capital within the community. Increased regional transportation pressures, specifically involving those commuting to the RMOW for employment were also noted. A few respondents mentioned that increased growth in various peripheral communities could also be viewed positively, as these communities had in the not too distant past been suffering economically and experiencing population loss.

Some interviewees recognized that the development of large “trophy homes” on former agricultural land, especially in the Pemberton Valley was occurring. This type of development was identified as having the following effects:

- Fragmentation of viable farmland;
- Increased potential for land use conflicts (e.g. new property owners upset by various farming practices occurring on adjacent properties);
- Loss of high yield farmland (potato farms etc.) being converted by new property owners to less intensive agricultural uses such as hay fields simply to maintain agricultural property status for tax purposes; and
- The artificial escalation of agricultural property values and the inflated real estate market in Pemberton.

A number of interviewees mentioned the rising costs of real estate in Pemberton, with one planner identifying a number of practical problems which arose as a result. These included businesses in Pemberton which paid lower salaries or minimum wage having difficulty attracting employees and in some cases, even having to provide some type of

accommodation to attract or maintain employees. Further, it was noted that there were squatters in the region often living out of their vehicles, in barns or in out-of-sight makeshift campgrounds. In addition, this planner mentioned the difficulty in attracting planning professionals to work in the region, noting that it was very common to have potential candidates decline job offers at competitive salaries once they were made aware of housing costs in the region.

Less tangible effects that were identified included some long term residents' dissatisfaction with Pemberton's identity often being overshadowed by the "Whistler umbrella;" people migrating to the region with significantly different values than those of a more traditional farming community; and adaptation problems with long time residents of Squamish and Pemberton. These residents were traditionally employed in resource-based industries and were having difficulty with transitions into a more service-oriented economic environment.

A summary table of the effects of amenity migration on the region follows.

Table 5.5

Summary of Effects of Amenity Migration on the Region

Domains	Effects
Social	<u>Positive</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased development of recreational and cultural amenities results in greater access by residents of the region;
	<u>Negative</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The high cost of housing in the RMOW results in out-migration of employees, primarily to Squamish and Pemberton (down-valley growth); Because of different value systems, there has been increased land use conflicts among property owners Lack of affordable housing for service workers, results in squatters living in vehicles, barns and hidden makeshift campgrounds Pemberton residents are often upset with the community's identity being overshadowed by the "Whistler umbrella" New migrants to the Pemberton Valley tend not to share traditional farming values and consequently find little in common with farming neighbours.

Economic	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declining peripheral communities have experienced increased growth due to availability of land for housing and recreational purpose. <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The real estate market in Pemberton and the Pemberton Valley has experienced artificial escalation due to increased demand and housing prices in the RMOW; Pemberton businesses have experienced difficulty in attracting employees because of high housing costs Long-time regional residents who were traditionally employed in resource based sectors are having difficulty adapting to a more service-oriented economy.
Environmental	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No positive environmental impacts due to amenity migration were noted by interviewees. <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been increased vehicular pollution related to a large proportion of RMOW employees commuting to work from surrounding communities; There is increased loss of agricultural land because of the development of large “trophy” homes on large lots; Viable farmland has sometimes been fragmented by building of subdivisions and/or roads that result in a loss of the land for farming.

Within the context of changes believed to be precipitated by amenity migration, the RMOW and region will face the challenges of hosting the forthcoming 2010 Winter Olympic Games. The researcher wished to investigate participant perceptions of potential impacts associated with the Games, with particular attention to potential growth pressures in the RMOW and region. Other interviewee content relating to the Olympics will be reported in the section pertaining to planning strategies.

5.4 HOSTING THE 2010 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

The overall stance of interviewees was acceptance of the reality that the Olympics were coming and a willingness to work toward making the event positive in both the short and long term. All were aware that the international spotlight would be on the RMOW and region and that this would be an opportunity to send out a positive message about the

RMOW, British Columbia and Canada. Several mentioned the marketing potential; “The RMOW will be showcased to the world.” The Olympics would provide “a unique opportunity to promote sustainable living practices.” There was considerable emphasis by interviewees on developing Whistler as a “sustainability leader” and using this image to attract tourists. One participant indicated that hosting the Games would be a great chance for the development of community pride.

A few participants expressed reservations about aspects of the Olympics. There was some fear of facility cost overruns, IOC and VANOC hidden agendas and the potential for white elephants in the form of inappropriate facilities. However, checks on these views included the belief that the community had done a good job in negotiating its host role in the Olympics and that fairly strong principles had been set in the bidding phase. As one planner stated:

We are not going to change who we are for the Olympics. We want to host the Olympics because we think that we can do a good job. We aren't interested in growing accommodations for the Olympics.

Participant views on increased growth due to amenity migration resulting from staging the Games were cautious. Several acknowledged the possibility for some increased growth and subsequent higher real estate costs both in Whistler and regionally; others felt less knowledgeable about potential growth in the region. With respect to Whistler, most mentioned that the municipality's growth controls, namely that the bed unit cap would not permit growth to occur beyond set limits. There was some speculation that the expansion of the Sea to Sky Highway would cut commuter time significantly enough from Vancouver to Squamish, so that the latter might experience increased population growth to the point of becoming a bedroom community for Vancouver. It was thought that Pemberton would not experience much growth.

While the Olympics were seen as presenting challenges, most interviewees believed that that benefits would also result, thereby alleviating some of the concerns related to the

effects of amenity migration. Policies, planning strategies and practices pertaining to these effects, as identified by interviewees, follow.

5.5 PLANNING FOR AMENITY MIGRATION

The interviewees were asked for their perspective on effective ways of dealing with the effects of amenity migration. Their responses are presented in this section beginning with the First Nations, followed by the RMOW and then a regional perspective on policies and planning practices. The section concludes with general recommendations as identified by interviewees for addressing various effects related to amenity migration.

5.5.1 First Nations Planning Approaches

Interviewees perceived that positive relationships were being fostered between municipal, regional and First Nations' governments. Most participants cited the development of the First Nations Cultural Centre in the RMOW and the working relationships between governments related to the upcoming Olympic Games as catalysts for further improvement of partnerships with First Nations. The comment was made that the First Nations would have opportunities to showcase their culture in the RMOW and region, thereby fortifying their culture. A municipal politician stated "We tried to solve their problems with our solutions and this didn't work. We realise the need for increased partnerships."

Another politician suggested a failure in the land claim process, but that First Nations were at a turning point in their evolution and seeking economic success within the region. A range of strategies presented below were identified as being critical for the maintenance and enhancement of the community.

The following findings are specific to the Lil'wat First Nations. Although the strategies were not necessarily developed to deal specifically with amenity migration, they were identified as measures that the Lil'wat Nation had undertaken to improve the overall well

being of the Lil'wat people in the face of existing conditions in the region, including increased regional growth pressures resulting from amenity migration.

5.5.1.1 Social Strategies

It was noted that some inroads to re-establish a presence in the region over the last twenty years had been through the participation of aboriginal youth in sport, in particular, through skiing and snowboarding. The local provision of a variety of social services for the Lil'wat community including schools and counselling services were also identified as being beneficial to the well-being of the Lil'wat people. However, it was noted that the community of Mt. Currie had no significant economic core and that a majority of band economic activity occurred in Pemberton. Counteracting this "economic leakage" was deemed a challenge.

5.5.1.2 Economic and Cultural Strategies

Two major initiatives seen as adding substantially to the Lil'wat Nation's well being were the development of the Squamish/Lil'wat First Nations Cultural Centre in the RMOW and various aspects of the 2010 Olympic Games.

The conceptual development of a jointly based First Nations Cultural Centre in the RMOW was seen as beginning approximately eight or nine years ago largely as a result of strong personal relationships between individuals in the Squamish and Lil'wat First Nations and the RMOW. The Centre was viewed as a response to the perceived lack of the First Nations' cultural presence in the RMOW. It was intended to be a focal point for demonstrating the past and present existence of First Nations in the area as well as an opportunity for economic development for First Nations, for example, as a centralised venue for First Nations' artists and a promotional setting for the advancement of First Nations' tourism ventures. Development of First Nations' community pride was envisioned as a possible outcome. It was noted that the forthcoming Olympics provided an impetus for the advancement of this project due to be completed prior to the Olympics.

The Lil'wat were aware of the potential for cultural appropriation due, in part, to the location of the Centre in the RMOW as opposed to a location within Mt. Currie. An interviewee expressed the fears of some Lil'wat community members that the Centre would contribute to the enhancement of the RMOW experience at the cost of further distancing the Lil'wat from their own territories.

The RMOW's hosting of the Olympics was identified as having potential benefits to the Lil'wat Nation, namely economic development opportunities and increased recognition associated with Lil'wat Nation construction companies. These companies were partnering with VANOC on various contracts for the construction of Olympic facilities in the region. The creation of the Olympic Legacy Agreement was also noted as beneficial. Initiated by the BC government, this agreement involved the transfer of 300 acres (122ha) of provincial Crown land within the RMOW and region to be held as fee-simple private properties by the Squamish and Lil'wat First Nations for the purpose of providing economic development opportunities for these groups. The process of selecting specific lands and the particular uses that would maximize Lil'wat economic development opportunities was identified as challenging, given the multiple stakeholders involved in this process.

5.5.1.3 Land Use Strategies

In describing various Lil'wat land use strategies, an interviewee noted that the Lil'wat leadership realised that recognition and power were required to successfully protect their rights, as previous more isolationist approaches had proven to be less successful. The Lil'wat approach was believed to be well balanced with respect to economic, socio-cultural and land objectives.

A number of initiatives were specified regarding ways in which the interests of the Lil'wat people could be advanced. An important undertaking mentioned was the Lil'wat people's current engagement in the development of their land use plan. This was being done both for the community and partly in response to the ongoing provincially initiated Land and Resource Management Plan that was being developed for the area. Information

in this Lil'wat plan was first collected approximately twenty years ago, when some community members began identifying place names in the region and interviewing elders about where they used to hunt and trap. Approximately four years ago, this documented information was amassed and presented graphically as a map which has been titled the "Cultural Heritage and Land and Resource Protection Plan. This map was then used as the basis for the land use plan.

An in-house Lil'wat GIS department had also been developed. Currently, there was a 20 person working group looking at many land use aspects including the spiritual and cultural value of areas within the Lil'wat territory; working geographically from a watershed perspective, they were in the process of finalizing a draft plan this year. In referring to the development of this plan, an interviewee commented:

"This is our strategic planning for our community and one of our goals is maximum control over our traditional territory. One of the goals is to develop a traditional territory land use plan. The community wanted to be able to put their vision on a map, it is a useful communication tool with other jurisdictions, they understand the language of mapping. We also don't want to misrepresent our values by using this format. It can be a struggle..."

Protocol agreements to foster improved working relationships between the Lil'wat and Squamish Nations, and the Lil'wat and the SLRD related to land use matters and economic development issues were also noted as being useful. The interviewee presented the historical evolution and purpose of both of these agreements. The Squamish - Lil'wat partnership agreement was initiated as a result of the Squamish Nations entering the treaty process with the provincial government. When this treaty process was initiated, a territorial map was required to be submitted to the Province by the First Nation group engaging in the treaty process. The submitted Squamish Nation map identified some traditional areas which overlapped with traditional Lil'wat territories including areas in the Whistler valley corridor. Realising the pressure of significant development that was occurring in the region, the impending Olympics, the fact that both Nations did have some common traditional territories, and the potential for unproductive disputes over territory amongst themselves, these First Nations governments formalized a protocol

agreement in 2001. The agreement was intended to help these Nations protect their mutual interests in shared territories as well as to aid in the identification and advancement of economic development opportunities for these Nations in the region.

Similarly, a recently developed non-legally binding protocol agreement between the Lil'wat Nation and the SLRD was developed to ensure improved working relationships on land use matters. Increased land use pressures in the region were noted as the catalyst for this agreement. With respect to land use and economic development, an interviewee noted that approximately half of the 6000 acres of Lil'wat reserve land was suitable for agricultural production and that there was community desire to see earlier forms of agricultural development re-kindled by the Lil'wat people.

5.5.2 RMOW Planning Approaches

The following section is divided into a number of various subsections. The researcher was interested in obtaining participant views about current and future strategies to manage effects of amenity migration as well as major planning initiatives identified in the earlier phase of the research.

5.5.2.1 Overview Comments

General participant comments regarding planning within the RMOW included that the RMOW was characteristically an active community in facing challenges with a population that was often highly engaged in community matters. The importance of a strong or well developed community vision was mentioned, with two interviewees noting that one aspect of Whistler's success could likely be attributed to the community always having, in some degree, guiding objectives or a "vision." The successful integration of neighbourhoods with mixed diversity was mentioned, with a planner further commenting that the RMOW had been fairly successful at delivering affordable housing that was distributed throughout the community and well integrated within existing community neighbourhoods. It was also noted that there was continued room for testing and developing appropriate solutions to amenity migration and that the RMOW could

continue learning from the experiences of other more mature North American mountain resort communities.

5.5.2.2 The Bed Unit Cap as a Limit to Growth

The bed unit cap on growth in the RMOW (currently set at 55,500 units) was mentioned first by all interviewees who had familiarity with the RMOW or region. The majority of interviewees thought that it was an effective tool with some describing it as a “unique solution” and “sacred tool.” One planner mentioned that the bed unit was a good measure of growth: when tracked against demand for services (original purpose of the bed unit), it correlated positively. That is, growth in the RMOW and demand for services as indicated by sewage treatment plant volumes increased proportionally. A contrasting view was held by another planner who showed minimal enthusiasm for the bed unit’s usefulness as a growth management tool, believing it to be confusing to use. It was also noted that resident restricted housing doesn’t fall within the bed unit cap.

5.5.2.3 Affordable Housing

This topic was prominent in most of the interviews. The provision of adequate affordable housing was seen as a matter of high priority within the community. One interviewee estimated that seventy percent of the energy expended by the community in planning focused on affordable housing. Maintaining seventy-five percent of employees housed within the RMOW was identified as a benchmark goal to be maintained; it was believed that this was a desirable level of support for the tourism economy and resulted in less sprawl down-valley, fewer traffic pressures due to commuting; a larger number of more satisfied employees, and generally, a more vibrant community. A key industry stakeholder made the point as follows:

What makes our resorts successful is having people there. I mean the RMOW is more successful because there is a permanent population there. That is what sustains a lot of the businesses there throughout the year. The seasonal population is also what makes the RMOW successful; their youthful energy is a selling point.

One interviewee noted that Intrawest recognized the importance of having affordable housing in its resorts and that this housing could be developed in a cost-neutral fashion. For example, the last two major hotels built by this developer included employee housing.

The general impression conveyed by interviewees was that a series of measures had been in place for several years, the combined effect of which was to maintain control of the municipality's housing situation. One interviewee mentioned the development of the RMOW Act in 1975 as permitting the municipality considerable range in the strategies adopted. A number of interviewees noted the establishment of a development cost charge for the provision of affordable housing, entitled the Employee Works and Service Charge. This Charge was similar to an earlier one adopted in Aspen, CO. Developed in the early 1990s, it involved new businesses paying a fee for a proportion of their employees or else providing adequate housing for employees. A planner noted that by the mid 1990s the Employee Housing Fund had generated approximately \$7 million dollars (CDN), allowing the RMOW to establish an arms length corporation entitled the Whistler Valley (W.V.) Housing Corporation. The W.V. Housing Corporation had proceeded to acquire suitable lands and develop both rental and "for purchase" affordable housing in the RMOW.

A majority of interviewees identified the importance of the development of the Whistler Housing Authority in 1997. This organization had overseen the development of affordable housing within the community in close cooperation with the RMOW planning department. Interviewees reported that since the early 1990s, 4,000 affordable bed units had been built, with 3,200 more in the pipeline, including approximately 1,500 in what would become the Legacy Neighbourhood (former Athlete Village). Some additional units would likely be developed on a 300 acre land bank donated by the province.

Currently, there were 165 rental units and 384 units for purchase. Rental for a price restricted rental unit was approximately \$700 dollars while market rental was in the \$1000 dollar range. A planner indicated that the provision of affordable rental housing

fulfilled two objectives: it increased the stock of available housing; and helped control RMOW market rental prices because of the increased supply, thereby allowing the RMOW not to institute rent controls. The WHA had managed a waitlist for these properties and it was noted that current employees, no longer living in the community, were encouraged to remain on the waitlist.

Two interviewees noted the important work of the WHA in monitoring the affordable housing supply as well as conducting a full scale study on potential areas for development of resident restricted housing, occupancy evaluation surveys to assess “liveability” of such housing, and exit surveys.

One planner described how occupancy and price restrictions on affordable housing stock were maintained through zoning bylaws and various charges to title (covenants) against the properties. A zoning bylaw outlined the defining criteria for being an employee. Occupancy restricted properties denoted that an occupant must be an employee under the zoning definition. Price restrictions and resale restrictions limited the value of a unit, so that the cost could not escalate beyond affordable parameters. It was mentioned that every project had been different and that the value of a project built today would be based on the Vancouver Core Consumer Price Index. Further, there was a Right of First Refusal on every property; this meant that if someone tried to sell the property for more than the WHA assessed value or to someone not on the waiting list, the WHA could purchase the property and resell it. It was noted that the first few affordable housing projects were, unfortunately, only occupancy restricted, resulting in the first or second sales of these properties going far beyond affordability.

Two planners also mentioned the historical evolution of secondary suites in the RMOW and their contribution to providing affordable housing. Secondary suites were identified as being allowed outright in Whistler’s zoning since the mid 1980s. For some time secondary suites were even required to be built as resident restricted housing. Both planners noted the effectiveness of this policy in providing affordable housing units, noting that initially investors often welcomed a secondary suite as a mortgage “helper.”

With strong market interest, approximately seventy secondary suites a year were being delivered. However, they noted that in the past five years as more affluent investors purchased property, they were no longer interested in building secondary suites. As this source of housing diminished, a series of non-cost initiatives began to emerge.

These non-cost initiatives served at least two purposes: to maintain the supply of affordable housing and to offer owners options with respect to how they developed their homes. Thus owners could stratify a portion of their home (e.g. sell the secondary suite), sub-divide a portion of their properties for sale or have the option to build an above garage or unattached secondary suite. The development of a not-withstanding clause had allowed for a slight density bonus in house size for property owners who chose to develop a secondary suite provided they remained within the allowable FSR (Floor Space Ratio) of .35 on single family residential lots (RS 1). In essence, this clause allowed owners to slightly exceed the maximum developable house size of 3,500 square feet on single family lots. Uptake on this option was noted as minimal thus far.

A cash-in-lieu initiative was also developed to allow owners with secondary suite covenants on their properties a buy-out option to remove the covenant from title for a \$150,000 fee. This money was then given to the WHA to purchase housing within the RMOW and restrict it.

Several interviewees believed the WHA would need to target two groups: the elderly to facilitate their capacity to “age in place;” and young families with adults in their thirties who could not afford to live in the RMOW. It was also noted that the WHA had broadened its scope to develop a range of measures beyond affordable housing such as an employee bus pass and a car sharing program.

One interviewee noted an important direction for the WHA, namely working more closely with the region. Further, the WHA would continue to be involved in the development of affordable housing related to the Olympic Games with two WHA directors sitting on the 2010 Development Corporation Board. Generally, the WHA was

seen as making a very important contribution with respect to the provision of affordable housing. There was some regret that it had not been established ten years earlier. It was, however, suggested by one participant that given its nearly ten years of existence, the WHA was due for a general audit.

5.5.2.4 Zoning and Municipal Bylaws

Interviewees also mentioned a number of municipal zoning and bylaw strategies which had been employed to deal with or counteract identified problems with amenity migration. Zoning to reduce maximum allowable house size was noted, with participants identifying that the maximum house size in the RMOW had fluctuated from 3,500 sq. ft. to 5,000 sq. ft. and was currently set at the former. Manipulations to minimum lot size were also identified to counteract low density development. The municipality had set minimum lot size at twenty acres; however, an interviewee stated that many property owners would apply for sub-division of these parcels or simply build one single family home on these twenty acre parcels. This type of development was determined to be a threat to land use and in response, the municipality increased the minimum lot size to 100 acres. To date, no developer has taken the risk of building a single family home on a parcel of this size.

In response to the identification of problems associated with second-homes being rented for tourism accommodation, an interviewee mentioned that special zoning for tourist accommodation had been enacted allowing only new neighbourhoods to be zoned for tourist accommodation. In the Village, a “warm bed” bylaw permitting the use of privately owned hotel suites for visitor accommodation was enacted to ensure that the Village retained a lively atmosphere.

Zoning bylaws to restrict the size (floor space and frontage etc.) of commercial spaces as a means to encourage local business were also identified by a number of respondents who believed that these measures would help to maintain a “sensible” retail mix in the RMOW. One planner mentioned municipal boundary extensions as being useful in gaining land use control of peripheral areas, citing one past boundary extension

approximately ten years ago and a current application with the province. It was noted that the current application for extension was not sought after to encourage development and that any development within the extended area would be very limited.

5.5.2.5 Additional Strategies

A number of other strategies were mentioned by interviewees as helpful in addressing matters related to amenity migration. They included revenue generated for the municipality through the hotel tax; the anticipated development of some senior housing; Council study tours to more mature mountain resorts in the United States (e.g. Aspen, CO) to learn from their experiences; the implementation of selected smart growth principles in the development of the largely resident restricted new Rainbow neighbourhood; and finally, the development of Whistler Green Design Guidelines designed to help new developments minimize their ecological footprints.

Some anticipated strategies to deal with the associated effects of amenity migration mentioned by interviewees included the development of a zoning “sustainability filter” through which all new and redevelopment applications were assessed. Community affordable housing as a result of Olympic legacies such as the Athlete Village Legacy Neighbourhood was also noted. One interviewee thought that the implementation of a municipal sales tax in addition to property taxes could be used to generate extra revenues for the municipality.

Two interviewees commented positively on the development of the Whistler-Blackcomb Peak to Peak Gondola (a gondola linking the high alpine areas of both mountains). This new Gondola was identified by the participants as something that would keep the resort “fresh.” One interviewee speculated that the Gondola’s development may be in response to global climate change, which could potentially affect the future quality of snow-cover in the lower sub-alpine or base areas of the ski hills.

Research on various aspects of amenity migration was proposed by several interviewees as an important strategy for addressing needed improvements and making changes in policy and practices. These proposals are identified in a later section on future research.

5.5.2.6 Planning for Sustainability

While various measures pertaining to sustainability were identified by interviewees, the researcher was interested in learning about perceptions of two major municipal planning initiatives - the Natural Step (TNS) and Whistler 2020, the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan. No interviewee spontaneously mentioned the TNS, but all those familiar with Whistler spoke positively about this framework:

A great framework for understanding what sustainability means on the ground for the RMOW... A good educational framework to align decisions through... It has been important or helpful in increasing awareness about environmental issues on a community wide level... A recognized process for making decisions, it is a foundation or model on which the Whistler 2020 plan was built.

One interviewee thought, however, that the business community might not have a sound understanding of the framework. A planner suggested that the adoption of sustainability planning practices in the community was likely attributed to two factors. These included: Whistler's highly educated resident population that believed adopting sustainability practices was the "right thing" to do and a general community perception that embarking on community wide sustainability practices would likely have long term marketing benefits for the resort.

The second major planning initiative identified by interviewees was the Whistler 2020 Comprehensive Sustainability Plan. Most saw it as an important guide for community decision making and spoke highly of the process of developing the plan and the final three volume product, although one interviewee thought that the process was difficult and quite costly. It was stressed by interviewees that Whistler 2020 wasn't just a municipal plan, but a community wide plan. Community buy-in was seen as a very favourable feature of this plan. Interviewees were cautiously optimistic regarding the Plan's merit which would only become apparent over time. Despite the considerable community

investment in sustainability planning, one interviewee expressed a more pessimistic perspective:

Whistler is among the least sustainable of mountain communities. It's 15 km long. You have to drive your garbage to one of two collection centres. There are no designated wildlife corridors [a protected areas network plan, is currently being amended in the RMOW's Official Community Plan] The economy is reliant on a single vehicle "ski economy," and there is an endless stream of vehicles from here to Vancouver on weekends. We do a lot of this stuff [referring to Vision 2020 plan] but when all is said and done I am not convinced this is a sustainable community. It's not anyone's fault, it is just the way history has laid it out.

A thorough explanation of the rationale for the plan and the detailed process of its development were discussed with an interviewee who had direct involvement in the process. A detailed outline of the process, unavailable elsewhere, follows:

- Whistler It's Our Future was identified as a catalyst for the development of the Whistler 2020 plan. Whistler It's our Future was a community led campaign to raise awareness about issues of sustainability involving a series of community lectures and the production of toolkits (books etc.) for the community. The Natural Step was identified at this time as a potentially useful framework for the community. These initiatives were seen as sparking the development of a Comprehensive Sustainability Plan for the municipality.
- With an interest in the direction of Whistler's development, the municipality initiated the process by proposing five alternative future scenarios for Whistler based on a number of indicators such as traffic congestion, sales tax and green house gas emissions in the resort. The use of a software modeling tool (Quest) was utilised to develop these five alternative future scenarios.
- Approximately, 120 success factors for mountain resort communities were identified by consultants for the municipality.
- The public's opinion on the five future scenarios and success factors was sought through a survey of Whistler residents distributed through an open house and on the municipal website. The results showed that residents preferred a "blended" future scenario which allowed for infill development and raising the bed unit cap to allow for more resident restricted housing. A random survey by a third party was conducted to ensure that initial results weren't skewed; this survey confirmed the initial results.
- The municipality then began to work on developing a draft of the plan using the 120 success factors to develop sixteen different strategy areas with the use of The

Natural Step acting as a guiding framework. An open house was held and these draft plans were well received by the community.

- Task forces were then formed with a maximum of fourteen members for each strategy area with members selected by the municipality on the basis of expertise, stakeholder status, influence, commitment and capacity to be a team player. There was a degree of controversy about not simply inviting volunteers to serve on the task forces. The task forces were charged with defining the current status of the strategy area and outlining the future actions prioritized by year that would be required to ensure each strategy area to remain successful and sustainable. The recommendations were to be sent to the community for feedback as well as to Council for further refinement.
- Although the plan was a long-term one, actions were to be monitored on a yearly basis in order not to overwhelm all those involved. The process of developing specific yearly actions and monitoring were in the beginning stages. The intent was to improve in each strategy area on an annual basis.
- The philosophy was to engage the community with multiple partners to undertake the actions. To date, there were fifty-five organizations that had signed partnership agreements. This meant that they would adhere to what was outlined in the strategies and commit to a contract for each action.
- Regionally the municipality had presented to Squamish, Pemberton and the SLRD and were partnering with the SLRD on twelve strategies. The philosophy was to develop and fine tune the plan locally before attempting to integrate the wider region.
- With respect to monitoring the sixteen strategy areas, the municipality had committed to hosting a software and user interface on the municipal website where results could be monitored in relation to their identified targets. This software would have the capacity to allow partners to directly input data regarding the sixteen different strategy areas.
- It was mentioned that, if a Centre for Sustainability to showcase various aspects of sustainability, was developed in Whistler, it eventually could take over the role of monitoring the plan as a third party.

Additionally, it was noted that the municipality would staff a full time dedicated team of three to work internally on guiding the municipality's adherence to the targets developed within the sixteen strategy areas; externally on task force and partner coordination and facilitation; and finally, one position would be dedicated to various monitoring responsibilities. These staff would work in close association with the planning

department. The rationale for the development of Whistler 2020 and the community's general adoption of "sustainability" oriented planning was presented by one interviewee as follows:

The whole reason for the sustainability plan (referring to Whistler 2020) is to prevent us from going the route we have seen other resorts, where they have lost their community, they have moved away, they haven't controlled their natural areas, their built environment is a real mix and they have seen uncontrolled development on their boundaries. Then what are you? You are not as attractive as a resort, you become a hybrid. We did not want to go down that graph of decline and a successful economy is essential to maintain initiatives in environmental and social areas.

5.5.3 Regional Planning Approaches

All respondents familiar with the region identified the SLRD's Regional Growth Management Plan as an important policy document that would be utilised to guide and manage growth more effectively throughout the region. A second outcome of the plan would be to identify the interconnectedness of issues within the region in order to facilitate improved regional decision making. All respondents noted that the development of the Growth Management Plan was ongoing, with a majority indicating some concern and frustration with the lengthy duration of the process. One interviewee noted that "the process had been ongoing for a number of years."

One interviewee mentioned that the SLRD had focused on developing solutions to deal with impacts of amenity migration on the agricultural sector in the region, namely the loss of agricultural land to low density residential development. Zoning was identified as the most important regional tool to implement policy. Zoning regulations, in particular a 350 sq. meter floor area cap on single family residential development was instituted in order to discourage the break up of farming parcels and the development of large "trophy homes." Having fewer "trophy homes" in an area might prevent escalation of real estate prices. It was noted that in the next year the Community Plan Review would give more attention to the issue of "trophy homes." It was suggested that the existing floor area cap might become even more restrictive. Additionally, some type of density bonus for siting dwellings in a manner that was least disruptive to potential farm operations was

suggested. It was thought that the region could work with an agricultural advisory board to ensure compatibility of future developments with agricultural purposes.

A few interviewees mentioned that an improved public transit initiative between Squamish and Whistler had been implemented recently. However, these interviewees also expressed the view that there was a need for improved public transit regionally, suggesting the development of a regional transit authority. One participant mentioned improved relationships between municipalities in the region as being beneficial in the development of improved regional decision making. While another interviewee noted the improved relationships, the need for each community within the SLRD (Squamish, Pemberton, Whistler, Lilloet and Mt. Currie) to clearly define their vision and role within the region was expressed.

With respect to regional tourism development, an interviewee noted that the Pemberton Valley was becoming a destination for adventure tourism from Whistler, with subsequent disruption by heli-skiing, tours, mountain biking and trespassing. A regional solution for tourism management in the area was a proposed “Commercial Recreation Buffer Zone” around the Valley. The SLRD had identified “Community Crown Land Interface Areas” which could be integrated into the Sea to Sky Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) as areas particularly sensitive to the impacts of tourism. Although the province has not yet approved the inclusion of these areas in the LRMP, the intent of this designation would be to sensitize the province regarding impacts of tourism activities when issuing tenures.

5.5.4 General Planning Strategies Related to Amenity Migration

Some interviewees offered attitudinal perspectives that could benefit a community experiencing amenity migration. Thus an economically depressed community could look at amenity migration as a trend and attempt to manage the occurrence of the phenomenon in order to improve economic and social conditions. Maintaining a manageable pace of development was also noted as critical to the community’s effective functioning. A number of interviewees stressed that it was most important that a community have a

strong vision, a sense of its own history and locally defined values prior to growth occurring in order to retain its “sense of place.” One interviewee strongly enunciated the following perspective:

There have to be very formal and strong measures in place to ensure that visitors and newcomers are inside on the existing values so they don’t have to take twenty years to learn them. They have to be articulated and shared. Locals have to guide newcomers into the meanings of these values as well as being open to incoming influence.

Another interviewee highlighted the importance of strategic planning to attract the type of amenity migrant desired, if a community was interested in growth. Imaging and subsequent marketing were seen as useful approaches in this endeavour followed by the development of measures to assist those wishing to migrate to the community. This interviewee noted the importance of attracting families as amenity migrants. In regard to planning for amenity migration, informing the community’s decision makers about the phenomenon was deemed to be more effective than educating planners. It was recognized, however, that these decision makers were extremely busy and it was not easy for them to find time for such educational ventures.

5.6 FUTURE CHALLENGES

Interviewees made numerous comments throughout the interviews regarding the future challenges for the RMOW and region. Almost all effects related to amenity migration were seen as ongoing challenges. Most interviewees spoke to the importance of maintaining community vibrancy and economic well being, while not necessarily relying on growth and development. Developers likely favoured the BC government’s Commercial Area Ski Policy (CASP), which allowed developers to purchase Crown land at the base of ski hills for preferential prices, provided that on-mountain ski improvements were made. However, the fear was also expressed that continuous growth would lead to homogenization and significant environmental degradation with “Whistler becoming like everybody else.” It was noted that the bed unit cap would limit future growth and that the RMOW was reaching build-out with only four major remaining subdivisions to be developed, with the only other form of development occurring as infill.

With respect to economic well being, interviewees stressed the continuing challenges of being a resort community - maintaining visitor numbers, keeping hotel rooms filled and generally maintaining a “fresh” image in the face of increased regional and global competition. A number of interviewees spoke in terms of the “resort life cycle,” noting that Whistler was a mature resort, perhaps nearing the end of the cycle and having already experienced considerable amenity migration. One interviewee mentioned external factors that would likely impinge on the community - a rising Canadian dollar, United States citizens possibly requiring passports and less travel outside the United States by Americans. The challenge for Whistler was “to evolve or die.” Interviewees focused on the need for economic diversification away from a “ski economy” product, namely in the direction of arts and culture, learning, wellness and sustainability.

Issues related to housing occupied another prominent place in comments about future challenges. Maintaining affordable housing, possibly raising the RMOW’s goal of housing seventy-five percent of employees in Whistler, and dealing with future issues of “ageing in place” were frequently mentioned. Additionally, several interviewees noted regional planning challenges, citing various municipal agendas, lack of vision and differing priorities. One interviewee noted a problem in planning capacity at the provincial level: those planners responsible for the development of Land and Resource Management Plans were “overwhelmingly from natural science disciplines and when they prepare LRMPs, it is foreign to them that they should also be planning for rural residential development.”

An ideological challenge was identified by several interviewees who saw serious negative consequences to Whistler and mountain communities in general from the sole pursuit of financial gain. The free market economy was subject to considerable criticism:

It takes incredible willingness to depart from the status quo and commonly accepted practice that the free market is the be all and end all and nobody should challenge it...Right now we measure any buck spent on anything as economic development; not all economic development is community development...Anything anyone can do to make a buck will stand in the way of

long term progress. We have to wait until absolutely everybody has got their buck out of it before we can even plan to do what's next after that. You may be able to plan an economy based on that, but it's not a sustainable one and the damage it does to community is profound. What it does ultimately is to superficialize the culture around the sheer notion of wealth based on money and privilege as opposed to the depth of society that will allow itself to sustain itself in the face of real and changing environmental pressures... I think we're deluding ourselves in terms of community and I think our whole sense of economy is skewed. Until we wrestle it back under the influence of sustainability in our communities, I maintain that we are very vulnerable.

These comments indicated an awareness of the need for alternative growth scenarios for mountain resort communities that would not rely primarily on investment capital.

5.7 SUGGESTED FUTURE RESEARCH

A number of interviewees offered suggestions for future research that they believed would be useful regarding the development of planning strategies related to amenity migration. Research to identify the most effective methods to track the migration patterns of amenity migrants both entering and leaving the community and region was noted. Entrance and exit surveys of amenity migrants were proposed to identify what they found more or less desirable community attributes as well as their reasons for leaving. One interviewee wanted to find out whether amenity migrants were more drawn to Whistler because of the abundance of recreational amenities or because of the people and community culture. Two interviewees thought it would be useful for decision makers to know how many bed units amenity migrants represented. One interviewee mentioned that it would be interesting to study the consumer patterns of amenity migrants within the RMOW.

Another interviewee suggested a financial cost/benefit type of analysis to assess property tax revenue generated from amenity migration in relation to community expenditures on the provision of affordable housing and other infrastructure service costs related to amenity migration. Finally, one interviewee suggested that the study of any aspects related to the amenity migration phenomenon would be helpful for communities experiencing the phenomenon and for the ongoing development of the amenity migration

concept: “The phenomenon itself is only gradually being characterized. It is not so much one phenomenon as several.”

5.8 IMPORTANCE OF THE AMENITY MIGRATION CONCEPT

A question regarding the importance of the concept was asked of each interviewee near the end of the interview. By this stage interviewees had ample opportunity to discuss the concept, effects and planning strategies. The general consensus was that amenity migration was a significant phenomenon, one that a municipality and region must attempt to understand. However, one planner expressed the viewpoint that “we are so busy here that we don’t have time to sit back and look at the big picture.” Another interviewee did speculate about the future, indicating that the next wave of real estate development and amenity migration would be climate change driven.

The concept of amenity migration was seen by a few respondents as having a cycle, with Whistler and the region having already experienced significant amenity migration. Thus, Whistler was viewed as more of a laboratory for the study of amenity migration, whereas a community experiencing earlier stages of amenity migration might reap more immediate benefits from adopting the lens of amenity migration.

One interviewee saw the region as dealing with the effects of amenity migration, without really identifying the effects as features of amenity migration. The interviewee concluded “So we are aware of it. It would be good for an economic development officer [for instance] to have this awareness front and centre. As a planner, one probably runs more into the impacts.”

Because of the extensive nature of the findings, a summary table follows.

Table 5.6

Summary of Major Findings

Themes	Interview Findings
Conceptualization of Amenity Migration	<p>Respondents were equally divided in terms of familiarity with the concept. While well known by academic respondents, amenity migration as a concept was less well known by planners and others. The nature of amenity migration was readily appreciated by all, but not necessarily understood in terms of who moved where, for what reasons, for how long, and with what consequences. Most respondents emphasized the natural physical rather than the cultural amenities. Second-home owners were included in the definition by some interviewees; a few others specifically excluded them; indicating their view that second-home owner amenity migrants were less typical in more hinterland British Columbia.</p>
Characteristics of Amenity Migrants	<p>In 1970s and 1980s, amenity migrants were predominantly perceived as Vancouverites seeking recreational experiences. From the 1990s onwards, amenity migrants were characterized as often being internationally based with above average incomes and education and reflecting urban values and tastes. A significant portion were Baby Boomers who were not economically dependent on the tourism industry. They were usually second-home owners who were absent for varying time periods. Additionally, interviewees identified two other types of amenity migrants: those who moved to the RMOW for employment reasons and those who were seeking a more enhanced lifestyle in the RMOW and region.</p>
Effects of Amenity Migration	<p>Interviewees identified varied, multiple and interactive social, economic and environmental effects. Interviewees often emphasized the negative consequences. The major and still unresolved effect of the Lil'wat First Nations was that its people had historically experienced a loss of connection to traditional territory by being "pushed out" from what is now know as the RMOW and subsequently, from areas surrounding the RMOW. However, amenity migration was identified as central to the RMOW's success as a resort community, but the lack of affordable housing resulted in numerous negative effects such as "dark neighbourhoods," employee retention difficulties and socio-economic polarization of residents. "Spillover" effects included down-valley growth in neighbouring communities which also experienced serious impacts for residents in terms of living and housing costs. Some positive effects of amenity migration included the contributions made by knowledgeable, talented amenity migrants who could contribute to a community's economic and social development. However, a perceived overall effect of amenity migration highlights the transformation of the unique character of the mountain west, with a subsequent loss of "sense of place" that provides character to a community, and the emergence of homogenized patterns of living that rely on consumption of natural and manufactured resources.</p>

Hosting the 2010 Olympic Games	<p>Most interviewees indicated an acceptance of the reality of the forthcoming games and generally perceived them as an opportunity for promotion of Whistler as a “sustainability leader.” Some feared facility cost overruns and potential white elephants. There was an awareness of the likelihood of increased growth and economic spin-offs, but uncertainty about impact of further growth. Some believed that growth would be limited as a result of existing growth management strategies in the RMOW.</p>
Planning for Amenity Migration	<p><u>General Perspectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewees believed that the development of planning strategies would enable the community to benefit from amenity migration; • Interviewees indicated that the development of planning measures would regulate the pace of growth and development; • The importance of programs to transmit community values to newcomers was highlighted; • Planners and academics emphasized the value of developing programs to educate politicians regarding the nature of amenity migration; • Strategic planning was identified as a means of attracting a desired “type” of amenity migrant (e.g. families). <p><u>Lil’wat First Nations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the use of GIS mapping, the Lil’wat Nation has developed a land use plan entitled the “Cultural Heritage and Land and Resource Protection Plan; • The Lil’wat Nation has developed an in-house GIS department; • Protocol agreements between Lil’wat and Squamish Nations have been initiated to deal with overlapping territorial land use matters and economic development issues; • The Lil’wat and SLRD have adopted a non-legally binding protocol agreement to improve working relationships on land use matters. <p><u>RMOW</u></p> <p>Interviewees identified three foci for planning in relation to amenity migration: development of strong community vision; growth management techniques; and measures for provision of affordable housing.</p> <p><i>Community Vision</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special provincial designation of the RMOW as a resort community in 1975 was identified as a crucial marker in Whistler’s evolution; • The development of a warm bed zoning policy in the Village was seen as important in maintaining a vibrant atmosphere; • Needed community revenue was generated through a hotel tax; • Council undertook study tours to learn planning practices from more mature American mountain resorts; • The planning department initiated “green” design guidelines for new developments;

<p>Planning for Amenity Migration cont'd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A zoning based “sustainability” filter to guide assessment of all new and re-development applications is currently under development; • Municipal adoption of the Natural Step Program and development of the Whistler 2020 Comprehensive Sustainability Plan have identified the directional framework for the community’s future evolution; • Considerable effort was undertaken by the planning department to ensure widespread community engagement in developing the 16 different strategy areas of the 2020 Plan; • A full time dedicated team of three municipal staff will work on implementation and monitoring of the 2020 Plan in close collaboration with planning department. <p><i>Growth Management</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Bed unit cap has been employed as a major growth management tool; • Zoning bylaws have been adopted to limit maximum developable house size; • Land adjacent to existing municipal boundaries has been annexed, with very limited uses permitted on these lands in order to limit peripheral growth; • Various smart growth design techniques have been implemented in some neighbourhoods. <p><i>Affordable Housing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives have been undertaken to integrate affordable housing throughout community neighbourhoods; • A major planning initiative was the development of the Whistler Housing Authority to manage affordable housing stock with the goal of housing 75% of the RMOW’s workforce within the municipality; • To maintain affordability of units in perpetuity, the WHA implemented occupancy and price restrictions as well as right of first refusal on affordable housing stock maintained by the WHA; • Commercial and employee “linkage” program mandated businesses including hotels to provide staff accommodations; • The planning department initiated zoning ordinances in selected neighbourhoods to allow for the development of secondary suites with a cash in-lieu buy out option to remove this requirement with WHA receiving funding; • Non-cost initiatives were developed to allow property owners to sub-divide their properties or stratify a portion of their homes. <p><u>Regional</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provincial Sea to Sky Land and Resource Management Plan is currently undergoing a review; • The SLRD has initiated a regional growth management plan to manage growth and facilitate improved regional decision making; • Zoning practices employed by the SLRD were identified as the region’s most important tool to regulate land use, in particular, to limit maximum house size and protect viable farmland; • A public transit initiative has been developed between Squamish and
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	Whistler to benefit a commuting workforce.
Future Challenges	<p>All effects related to amenity migration were identified as challenges, in particular, maintaining affordable resident housing for at least 75% of RMOW employees. Respondents emphasized maintaining community vibrancy and economic well being, but not necessarily relying on growth and development. Fear was expressed that continued development could lead to increased homogenization and further environmental degradation.</p> <p>A major challenge identified by some interviewees related to the RMOW being both a resort and a community. The profit motive of developers was questioned by some interviewees as inappropriate for fostering community cohesion and aspects of sustainability. Issues related to the resort lifecycle included the RMOW being a relatively mature resort with a need to continually re-invent itself in order to attract tourists or else face a possible decline; and the RMOW diversifying from a ski economy in the direction of arts and culture, learning and wellness and sustainability.</p>
Future Research	<p>Interviewee proposals included: development of methods to track in and out migration patterns; resident entrance and exit surveys; study of amenity migrants to the RMOW to determine what attracted them; analysis of amenity migrants' consumer habits; identification of how many bed units amenity migrants represent in the RMOW; and a cost/benefit study to assess property tax revenue generated from amenity migrants in relation to community expenditures on affordable housing provision.</p>
Importance of the Concept of Amenity Migration	<p>Interviewees all indicated that amenity migration was a significant phenomenon and a trend that would to continue to affect the RMOW and region as well as other mountain locales. Respondents believed it was important for planners to be aware of amenity migration because they are continuously dealing with its effects, but not necessarily attributing effects to amenity migration. Further, planners were seen as being caught up in daily planning activities with limited time for considering macro issues. The concept was seen as more relevant for communities in earlier stages of amenity migration than RMOW.</p>

5.9 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this section is to explore the meaning of these findings. Are they in keeping with the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 or with the policy and planning directions identified in the detailed information on the RMOW and region in Chapter 4? Do they reveal new insights into the nature of amenity migration that may further refine

its conceptualization? Are there ways of addressing the effects of amenity migration that may be pertinent to other locales as well as contributing to the knowledge base on effective planning in relation to amenity migration?

The participants readily provided considerable information about various aspects of amenity migration as they understood the phenomenon. All were very knowledgeable in their own domains and several provided general overviews of the topic, having either conducted research on various aspects of mountain resorts for many years and/or engaged in a professional capacity in more than one mountain locale. The reality that 13 of the participants were male and 3 female may have some bearing on the nature of the interview content they shared. Generally, the amenity migration literature does not give great attention to gender, although Jobes (2000) referred to gender and marital status as strongly associated with migration. Gill (2000) also, in her study of Whistler residents' views, found that women demonstrated stronger support for community and environmental issues and men showed slightly higher levels of support for recreational and tourism development.

5.9.1 The Definition of Amenity Migration

The conceptualization of amenity migration is an important topic in the research and planning literature that focuses on understanding and managing the effects of this type of migration. Without a clear definition of the concept, it would be difficult for a community to develop strategic planning strategies. In this study, participants ranged from those who were very familiar with the concept to those with a more modest knowledge. A few participants had learned of the term very recently; half indicated they were unfamiliar with the term. The level of familiarity is perhaps a little greater than what Chipeniuk (2004) found in his study a few years ago. It was, however, still a relatively "new" term for some of the participants and therefore, not surprising that the term itself did not appear in any of the policies or planning documents of the RMOW or region. One would expect that if there had been more familiarity or awareness of the concept amongst those

professionally engaged in planning, it would be a visible anchoring point in policies and planning practices.

There may, however, be a number of other reasons for the term's absence, given that some participants were familiar with the term and all confirmed the importance of the phenomenon. These include the following:

- The relative recency of the term may influence its usage. It simply has not yet established itself in planning discourse.
- The ongoing discussion in the literature of “who are amenity migrants?” and “what are their characteristics?” suggests a degree of uncertainty or even, vagueness in the conceptualization and in development of an operational definition.
- The different positions on whether second-home owners should be included in the definition may interfere with its usage.
- Without agreement on criteria for determining who qualifies as an amenity migrant, the existence of different types of amenity migrants, and the lack of a classification system, municipalities may be inhibited in their use of the term.
- Municipalities may also be hesitant to label individuals or groups as amenity migrants, particularly if the term has a negative connotation such as those seeking a hedonistic experience, with little social value. Because amenity migration tends to be associated with negative effects, municipalities may not wish to inadvertently tarnish persons who also contribute to the community. Persons generally wish to be known as individuals rather than impersonally labeled.

The question remains: who exactly is an amenity migrant? Even interviewees involved in the RMOW tended to overlook permanent migrants and/or come to the realization during the interview that they themselves were amenity migrants. Thus one may ask: when does one cease to be an amenity migrant and become a local?

Given some of the currently unresolved issues about the concept, it might be proposed to avoid use of the term for persons, but refer to the phenomenon of amenity migration. This proposal flies in the face of Moss' (2003) idea of a community identifying the particular characteristics desired in amenity migrants and taking measures to attract them.

Further, this study and other research (Chipeniuk, 2004) strongly indicates the need for systematic tracking of the migratory patterns of persons to mountain communities. Clearly, it would be difficult to avoid not calling these people who are seeking amenities, “amenity migrants.”

It is important to note that all participants affirmed the importance of the concept for understanding their experience in the RMOW and region. While questions have been raised in this study regarding the attributes of the concept, it served as a useful catalyst for consideration of various issues. Therefore, it would appear worthwhile to continue to refine the conceptualization of amenity migration and to educate professional planners and politicians regarding the phenomenon. Additionally, a cautious approach is warranted to avoid possibly alienating persons who are simply pursuing their dreams in a time-honoured fashion, that is, they are seeking an improved quality of life in a setting that offers scenic, recreational and cultural opportunities.

Finally, participants involved primarily with the RMOW focused on the natural physical or built recreational amenities and less on cultural features as drawing cards for amenity migration. This is a somewhat limited view of how amenity migration is conceptualized in the literature. Perhaps because the RMOW is a relatively new community, it may be somewhat lacking in a historical past or the past is overshadowed by the “newness” of the resort itself. Whistler evolved primarily as a ski resort in a short time frame. Whistler’s youthfulness and reliance on a masterplanned village has likely not promoted emergence of a unique “sense of place” or “character” though one might argue that Whistler does have its own retail/ski resort style. One might expect more signs of First Nations’ presence in the RMOW, but given their sense of an historical “push out,” even the First Nations’ cultural contribution is not prominent. Recently, steps have been taken to rectify this situation.

Most interviewees affirmed that the RMOW needed to attend more vigorously to its cultural component for purposes of tourism. However, an improved cultural dimension might attract more amenity migrants. Dorward (2003) and Clifford (2002) have suggested

that the homogeneity of masterplanned mountain resorts does not bode well for the evolution of unique places. Increasing attention should likely be given to the cultural features of North American mountain resort communities in order for those settings to remain competitive as tourist destinations and to promote the development of the community's identity.

A major question that emerges is when does a single operator resort development become a full-fledged community. When do the values of a private sector profit-oriented developer evolve into public sector/public interest values characteristic of an incrementally-evolved community? The experience of the RMOW as delineated in this case study is telling in this regard.

The RMOW has moved significantly in the direction of a viable community that addresses the social, economic, health, education and recreational interests of its population. There is ample evidence of an ongoing heroic planning effort to keep the RMOW as "liveable" as possible. However, the RMOW still primarily attracts and provides for affluent amenity migrants, often internationally based, who reside in the RMOW on a non-permanent basis. The RMOW is well aware of the critical importance of attracting and retaining other types of amenity migrants - those seeking employment and young families. Without these types of individuals, the RMOW will not be able to provide for the needs of the more affluent migrants; nor will it evolve as a viable inclusive community where individuals of all ages and incomes can lead productive and satisfying lives. But lack of affordable housing and high living costs remain major impediments.

It is actually in the mutual interests of the developer and the RMOW to attract a diverse group of individuals. In other words, there is some congruence in the values of both the developer and the RMOW. Nonetheless, the profit motive remains central for the developer and the long term development of the community may be a secondary concern. Therefore, the challenge for the RMOW and any other similar mountain resort community is to clearly articulate its long term vision, identify who it wishes to attract as

residents and vigorously pursue the implementation of policies and practices that make it possible for these individuals to remain in the community.

5.9.2 Understanding the Effects of Amenity Migration

Despite some interviewees' modest familiarity with the term, all interviewees were able to discuss various consequences of amenity migration. These were the "real" issues for many of them. Because of the encompassing nature of the term, numerous effects could be thought of as related to amenity migration. These effects were both positive and negative.

For the Lil'wat Nation, a major effect of amenity migration related to their loss of connection to areas within their traditional territory, both in the RMOW and subsequently in the Pemberton Valley. Unaffordable housing in the RMOW was seen as the catalyst for increased development in Pemberton and area, essentially a "spillover" effect. In the RMOW, the major effect of amenity migration was rising real estate costs and the resulting lack of affordable housing which subsequently resulted in numerous localized and regional social, economic and environmental effects such as "dark neighbourhoods," social polarization, the growth of down-valley towns, transportation dilemmas and environmental degradation.

Overall, interviewees identified numerous related effects, so that ultimately the complexity became overwhelming and attributing causality primarily to amenity migration became more difficult. The literature on effects of amenity migration is similar in that usually numerous, diverse effects, many of which are interactive, are identified.

Further, the intertwining of effects related to tourism and amenity migration became increasingly difficult to discern. Both tourists and amenity migrants appeared responsible for some of the same impacts on the community and region, thereby creating a challenge for anyone attempting to research aspects of amenity migration in a tourist focused area or to plan for a viable community. This issue is beginning to be addressed in work by

researchers such as Hall and Muller (2004) and Hall and Williams (2002) who are exploring the interconnectedness of the once discrete domains of tourism and migration.

Does the complex interactive nature of the effects lead to abandonment of research and planning efforts to understand the nature of amenity migration and manage its effects? There are “doom and gloom” scenarios that may eventually transpire in the mountain west and that were identified by some interviewees and in the literature. Abandonment is not, however, an acceptable direction. Negative impacts on the physical and social environment in western mountain communities will likely persist and may become more pronounced, unless efforts continue to be made both to understand and address the harmful effects of amenity migration. Finally, more attention should likely be drawn to the capacity of various types of amenity migrants to contribute to these communities. This study and others have affirmed positive attributes of amenity migrants, but these tend to be overshadowed by negative impacts associated with amenity migration.

While each study contributes to a more developed understanding of how the effects are related and the consequences within a community or region, models for understanding their interaction are needed. These will further theoretical development and be useful in the formulation of policies and planning strategies to manage the outcomes of such migration.

Finally, this study and others affirm the importance of a regional approach both for considering the nature of amenity migration and development of effective management strategies.

5.9.3 Planning and Management Strategies

Just as interviewees identified a number of effects pertaining to amenity migration, they also presented a considerable array of planning strategies to address consequences related to amenity migration. In effect, there almost seemed to be a “grab bag” of policies and practices. No strategies were specifically linked to amenity migration, although

interviewees did identify a range of planning strategies as ameliorating negative effects of amenity migration.

This seeming contradiction can, in part, be explained by the absence of the term in the written planning documentation of the RMOW and region. Or it may be, as discussed above, that the term's theoretical and operational development is not sufficiently advanced to be useful in an applied setting. Further, it may be that planning initiatives tend to be reactive to a perceived problem, rather than emerging from a well developed theoretical understanding of a situation.

The planning approaches identified in the research involved social, cultural, economic and environmental strategies. There was a strong focus on strategies pertaining to affordable housing as well as land use and zoning. In the RMOW there was a major emphasis on planning and practices related to sustainability. A highly valued planning measure was the implementation of a bed cap unit as a limit to growth.

The Whistler Housing Authority was recognized as a crucial component in addressing the serious challenges posed by the lack of affordable housing within the RMOW. Since its inception a decade ago, this organization has played a vital role in enabling the majority of the RMOW work force to live and work in the RMOW and thereby contribute to a stable base of residents who engage with the many facets of community life.

Given the changing demographics of residents, it is not surprising that the RMOW and other similar mountain resorts should direct their attention to enabling their older citizens to continue living in their chosen community. At the same time, the populations of such places may be lacking younger, more family-oriented people who will need more educational and other social services, but who will also contribute to improved community vitality.

What was impressively evident in this study was that all the communities and regions were strongly committed to planning, with some having more clearly articulated visions

to guide their activities, in particular, the RMOW and the Lil'wat people. Interviewees from the RMOW were very consistent in their responses to questions regarding their community's directions. The heavy investment in the development of Vision 2020 and the widespread community engagement in actions related to the many strategic areas within the plan promote an atmosphere where there is a sense of direction and commitment to community goals. The Lil'wat people were also engaged in a number of positive ventures to promote their community's well being. This type of strategic planning was identified by Moss (2000) as important for community's sense of being in charge of its growth and direction.

The SLRD was engaged in a growth management process which may, upon completion, contribute toward an enhanced regional outlook. The challenge for the SLRD currently pertained to managing a large area with a number of diverse needs. The literature on planning for amenity migration, although modest in size, suggests that it is critical that a community or region have a well delineated vision and inventory of its resources and assets. Otherwise, it will be difficult for a community to direct its efforts in a systematic fashion to achieve its goals.

The development of a regional perspective with strong partnerships among its constituents was identified by interviewees as critical in terms of mitigating the effects of amenity migration. Otherwise, as Beck (1995) noted, there was potential for "spillover" effects in down-valley regions. However, community interests may predominate in various planning exercises and it is often difficult to find resources to engage in intensive regional planning. Because of the perceived linkages among effects of amenity migration, it would be useful to develop more effective regional strategies for their management. Other levels of government may also be expected to play a greater role. The argument for more resources and involvement of the province has been made by Chipeniuk (2004) who also speculated about why the province had not thus far actively addressed amenity migration. He believed that the province was focused on growth and heightening its attractiveness to a range of newcomers; how exactly they might distribute themselves within BC was a matter to be dealt with on a more local level.

The findings from this study also highlight the perceived beneficial role of partnerships in planning endeavours of municipalities and regions with First Nations groups. The Lil'wat wish to improve their financial well being, but not at the cost of eroding their cultural identity. Because the Lil'wat people have seen themselves as historically experiencing considerable loss due to migration of non-aboriginals to the area, they are apprehensive about any further encroachment on their lifestyle. Achieving an improved financial position entails more interaction with other communities; hence, the importance of collaborative working relationships. The forthcoming Olympics were identified as an opportunity for the Lil'wat to advance their goals.

Given the concerted efforts of planners to address the consequences of growth in the RMOW and region, what are the lessons learned about planning for amenity migration in the RMOW and region that may be pertinent for planners in similar locales?

Overall, there are several lessons to be learned from analysis of the planning endeavours of the RMOW and region that affirm known principles of planning as well as provide pertinent insights. First, the RMOW has committed itself to an intensive planning process to determine its community vision for an extended time period and it has delineated major strategic areas as well as monitoring mechanisms. All of this bodes well for the RMOW effectively managing growth and development, but in some respects, the planners who have the professional knowledge to assess the ongoing effects of amenity migration and tourism are not the powerful players. The politicians and developers maintain major decision making capacities.

While the planners do work for the community and region, they are only as powerful as policy permits them to be. They can recommend policy to the politicians who require ongoing education and an informed community of residents who can make their needs known. While the planners do strongly believe in engagement of the public within the RMOW and region and they are committed to partnerships, there is no question that daily demands of practice keep them from focusing on longer term goals and overarching ideological issues pertaining to the transformation mountain west. For example, many

interviewees expressed interest in research that would enable the RMOW and region to grasp more fully the nature of amenity migration within the area, but there was little comment on who would have the resources to conduct such studies.

Nonetheless, the role of the planner is to provide an informed analysis of a problematic situation, in this instance, rapid growth in a mountain community resulting in numerous negative consequences, and to make recommendations that will enable the community to retain the environmental and cultural features that originally drew persons to the community. The findings of this thesis regarding the absence of the concept of amenity migration in planner discourse, albeit with affirmation of its importance during the research interviews, strongly suggest that amenity migration could be an anchoring concept for planners that would enhance the planner's ability to plan effectively. Armed with systematically acquired knowledge about the characteristics of amenity migrants in the community, the particular attractions that drew these migrants and the nature of their engagement with the community, planners would be in a better position to help the community work toward its goals.

In other words, rather than being bogged down by daily demands for the approval of development and building permits, planners would ultimately be in a better position to stay focused on the community's vision. In order to fulfill a leadership role, planners will need to become increasingly persuasive, assertive and ingenious in their interactions with developers, politicians and community members. An individual planner might not be able to assume this stance as readily as a group of planners with vision and determination to argue for their viewpoints and required resources.

5.9.4 Amenity Migration and the Olympics

Hosting a portion of the 2010 Olympics was, for the most part, viewed positively. The Olympics were seen as a catalyst for resolving a number problematic effects related to amenity migration. The Athletes Village and resultant Legacy Neighbourhood would provide additional affordable housing; the 300 acre provincial Legacy land bank would contribute additional land for commercial and housing purposes within the RMOW as

well as economic development opportunities for the Squamish and Lil'wat Nations. The Squamish - Lil'wat Cultural Centre developed in the RMOW was seen as providing a venue for showcasing First Nations' presence in the area as well as improving the RMOW's cultural tourism component. However, the Lil'wat were also aware of the potential for cultural appropriation that might occur if their culture was featured without their exercising substantial control and direction over the endeavour.

Overall, respondents seemed most accepting of the Olympics and not highly anxious over an event of this magnitude. There was varied opinion about the implications of increased amenity migration due to the Olympics, with most expressing confidence that at least in Whistler, the current growth measures, in particular the bed unit cap would be sufficient to manage growth. There was greater certainty that Squamish's population would increase due to the expansion of the Sea to Sky Highway and the proximity of Squamish to Vancouver. There was less certainty about the implications of growth in the region, with the Lil'wat expressing some apprehension about future growth.

It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that an attitude of confidence, if not nonchalance, characterized most interviewees' responses regarding delivery of the Games. Perhaps the magnitude of the event is difficult to appreciate in advance; without direct experience of a modern Olympics, the citizenry may be somewhat caught off guard by the increasingly frenzied pace of preparation and the short and long term consequences of a huge influx of Canadian and international visitors in a very short time period.

5.9.5 Anticipating Future Challenges

Both interviewees and the literature suggested that mountain resort communities experience or pass through various stages of development. The RMOW was seen as having passed through its intensive growth phase, but still striving to remain a vibrant community with a vision of itself for many years into the future. In many respects, the RMOW had engaged in many of the desired common practices identified by Lowe, McMahon and Propst (1997) such as developing a widely shared vision and other

measures. Perhaps the RMOW was not “minimizing the need for regulations;” indeed, given the many strategies related to managing amenity migration, more regulations would likely result.

Considerable apprehension was expressed among interviewees and in literature pertaining to amenity migration about the long range effects of not planning effectively for growth. There was heartfelt concern about whether sustainable practices can be instituted before there had been such serious harm to the environment that it would not be possible to return to a more pristine state. Strategic planning on a regional basis is needed to avoid continuous inroads on the physical and cultural environments within the region. Resources are, however, limited and structures to address regional concerns are hard-pressed to engage all the relevant stakeholders in a concerted effort in planning.

To address the many and varied effects of amenity migration, in particular, the matter of affordable housing and the increasing social gap between lower and higher income groups in a community or region, continuous efforts by politicians and planners need to be made to address issues in a proactive fashion. If this does not occur in a significantly consistent and vigorous fashion, the lifestyle of residents in the RMOW and region will likely deteriorate.

While the RMOW has received awards for “liveability,” the question even now can be raised as to the meaning of this term. When employees find themselves living as squatters or having to commute from outlying communities, one must question just how desirable their lifestyle is. Similarly, when long time residents of the RMOW find themselves unable to downsize and/or locate more age-appropriate accommodations and health care within their home community, one may wonder about the meaning of “liveability.”

For First Nations in the region, there are ongoing questions pertaining to economic self-sufficiency. If there are no employment opportunities locally, coupled with escalating housing costs, then there will be increased reliance on social and health services, but with a sense of demoralization that accompanies such dependence. At the same time, there

may be nearby glimpses of affluent lifestyles at variance with local conditions that result in increasing alienation of local long-time residents.

Further, communities such as the RMOW are increasingly open to the influence of global factors that may have both positive and negative effects on the development of the RMOW and the region. Currently, the anticipated Olympics may be the catalyst for growth that does provide various legacies, both cultural and physical, for the population throughout the region. The continuous enhancement of municipal, regional and First Nations' visions of themselves as viable entities will enable them to meet future challenges as long as comprehensive planning among partners throughout the region occurs. An obstacle to such planning arises from the pressures of daily work loads. Commitment and education of politicians is necessary if existing and future challenges are to be dealt with effectively. Maintaining and encouraging community participation in planning processes is also a vital component for success.

The question remains, however, whether the "resort community" is a viable model to pursue within North American society. Given the profit motive of developers, the RMOW is already reserved only for the very affluent, with a major social gap existing between those with such resources and those who serve them. Planners find themselves attempting to bridge this gap. The case study does reveal that the planners in the RMOW and region have mounted a substantial planning effort in response to both community needs as well as those of developers. Major challenges remain for the planners in keeping the agreed-upon vision of the RMOW in the forefront, pursuing stronger regional planning partnerships, and resisting the relentless demands of the market for more "trophy" homes.

Further, when a resort development evolves into a community, planners are faced with increasingly complex planning issues involving multi-stakeholder interests. In order to adequately monitor and address the range of issues including the preservation of the environment, planners require sufficient resources including specialized skills as well as the capacity to advocate for equitable policies that respect the dignity of all persons.

Although planners in the RMOW and region have been addressing the effects of amenity migration, they have not consciously utilized the concept in their planning processes and tended to suggest that the RMOW had already passed through a period of high amenity migration. Given the potential impact of the 2010 Winter Olympics as well as continued tourism, it would be useful for planners to reconsider how they might use the lens of amenity migration to better understand the phenomenon of population growth and migration to the RMOW and region.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In this chapter, there will be a summary of the research in relation to the first three goals of the study and a consideration of the lessons learned from the Whistler experience and the implications for the planning profession. The chapter concludes with an identification of the limitations of the study and directions for future research.

6.1 Summary of the Research

The purpose of this thesis was to contribute to the knowledge about amenity migration in mountain communities as well as the planning strategies and processes employed by these communities in managing social, environmental and economic effects associated with amenity migration. The focus of the research was on Whistler and its environs. A case study design was utilized in this study. The RMOW and surrounding region was chosen because of its status as a major North American ski resort which has become known as a successful resort community model and more recently as a leader in addressing issues related to sustainability and planning.

The methods chosen in this study included a literature review, document collection and analysis, semi-structured, in-depth interviews with sixteen key stakeholders and several site visits to the RMOW and region as well as participation in several conferences relating to amenity migration and mountain resort planning. The interviews occurred from June 2005 to April 2006 with analysis completed by June 2006.

The literature review revealed that amenity migration had been defined in 1985 by Moss and other researchers who were interested in understanding the increasing development of mountain regions, primarily in the North American west. Initially it was thought that tourism was the driving force, but early studies began to identify migration of varying types of people drawn to places because of their perceived natural and cultural amenities. Research focused on the characteristics of these amenity migrants and the range of effects on the places to which they had migrated. Although amenity migrants were seen as contributing in various ways to their chosen communities, much of the literature from diverse sources tended to emphasize the negative consequences related to their short or

longer-term stays in these locales. The major issue identified in the literature pertained to the cumulative effects of increased migration on fragile physical and cultural environments, leading some authors to envision the eventual homogenization of the mountain west as well as increasing degradation of these areas. The literature on planning for amenity migration was much more limited.

In order to understand Whistler and its region as the context in which amenity migration had occurred, information relating to relevant historical, cultural, environmental, physical, social and economic features was presented as well as an overview of key planning initiatives. Originally the area was home to First Nations peoples, followed by a series of others including prospectors, trappers, loggers and railway personnel. By 1914, the first tourist lodge had been built. Major development of Whistler as a ski resort occurred in the early 1960s in order to bid for the 1968 Winter Olympics. Despite financial troubles in the 1980s, Whistler emerged as a major North American resort community by the 1990s. In 2010, the RMOW in conjunction with Vancouver will host the Winter Olympic Games. Whistler lies within the Squamish - Lillooet Regional District, with neighbouring communities of Squamish and Pemberton. These communities have followed different developmental trajectories, but have also experienced effects related to the RMOW's growth.

The first goal of the study was to identify the relative awareness of amenity migration by selected key stakeholders in the RMOW and region. The major findings were as follows:

- Key stakeholders revealed three levels of familiarity with the concept of amenity migration: those who were very knowledgeable, mostly researchers; some who were moderately familiar and others who had little prior familiarity with the concept.
- All respondents offered a definition of amenity migration that was congruent to Moss' definition which had been provided in the preliminary research materials. Few gave a textbook definition except for the academics. Most interviewees focused on the natural physical and/or built recreational amenities as opposed to cultural or other attractive features of place. Some included second-home owners in their definitions, whereas others did not. In one instance, second-home owners were specifically excluded because the interviewee believed that amenity

migrants to hinterland British Columbia were generally primary residents, while amenity migrants to resort and gateway communities tended to be second-home owners.

- Respondents differentiated among amenity migrants to the RMOW, with the first wave in the 1970s characterized as primarily Vancouverites, keen to enjoy the recreational opportunities in the area. By the 1990s, most of the amenity migrants were seen as affluent, often internationally based and tending to reflect “urban values.”
- Some amenity migrants were perceived as less “tuned into” community issues, whereas others were seen as very involved in issues of concern to them.
- Two other types of amenity migrants to the RMOW were also identified: those moving for economic reasons and employment and those wanting to improve their “quality of life.”

The second goal of the study was to provide a descriptive overview of the effects of amenity migration in the RMOW and region perceived by interviewees. In summary form, the findings included the following:

- Some interviewees believed that there had been an erosion of the mountain west’s unique character due to rapid expansion, resort development and population growth. Additionally, a localized “sense of place” in mountain communities had been replaced by more homogenized values of mainstream North America.
- Two observations pertained to planners: that they could more readily identify effects related to more affluent amenity migrants and that they were more likely exposed to the negative effects of amenity migration.
- The Lil’wat identified both positive and negative social, economic and environmental effects of amenity migration. The most prominent effect was the loss of connection to their traditional lands, in effect, a “push-out” with subsequent losses of traditional areas for farming, hunting and food gathering. Due to increased development throughout the region, the Lil’wat have experienced ongoing encroachment on their territory. On the positive side, there were more recreational opportunities for children and youth, employment in the service and construction sectors and more business partnerships with various public, private and other First Nations.
- Respondents identified numerous social, economic and environmental effects of amenity migration on the RMOW. All interviewees emphasized the lack of affordable housing as the most significant effect, with other consequences resulting from the escalation of housing costs e.g. growth of “down-valley” communities, increased transportation pressures, a diminishing middle class,

“dark” neighbourhoods, the presence of squatters, and difficulties in attracting and retaining a labour force.

- Positive effects of amenity migration in the RMOW included greater access to recreational and other services because of absentee second-home owners. Amenity migrants were seen as central to the economic success of the RMOW due to their investment in private property, tax revenues and consumption of goods and services.
- Negative effects of amenity migration in the region involved the out-migration of residents to the “down-valley” areas with resulting escalation of housing costs, loss of farmland and increased pollution due to transportation.
- Positive effects in the region included an influx of residents who could contribute knowledge and skills to the development of the region. There were also increased social and employment opportunities for regional residents.

The third goal of this study was to identify the planning and management strategies which have been employed by the RMOW and region to address issues related to the phenomenon of amenity migration. These findings are presented in relation to general perspectives on planning, and planning approaches of the Lil’wat First Nations, the RMOW and the SLRD:

- Interviewees generally believed that amenity migration could benefit a community by improving economic and social conditions, if the pace of growth and type of development were managed through a variety of planning measures. In particular, politicians needed to better understand the nature of amenity migration. Further, strategic planning could be employed to attract the type of amenity migrants desired. In order to retain a “sense of place,” respondents thought it important to have a strong community vision, a sense of the community’s history and locally defined values before major growth occurred.
- Overall, the Lil’wat indicated that positive relationships were being fostered between municipal, regional and First Nations governments. This was symbolized by the development of the First Nations Cultural Centre in the RMOW and the working relationships related to the 2010 Olympic Games.
- The Lil’wat identified several social, economic, cultural and land use strategies as important to improving the overall well being of their people as well as addressing regional growth pressures resulting directly from amenity migration. The following were cited as important: the development of a Lil’wat Nations land use plan, the formation of an in-house GIS department, protocol agreements among First Nations to deal with overlapping territorial land use matters, and the initiation of a protocol agreement between the Lil’wat and the SLRD to improve working relationships on land use matters.

- In relation to the RMOW interviewees identified three foci for numerous planning measures related to growth and amenity migration: development of a strong community vision; growth management techniques; and measures for the provision of affordable housing.
- With respect to the RMOW's community vision, interviewees believed that the provincial designation of the RMOW as a resort community in 1975 was critical to the formation of the RMOW's identity. Additional important measures included the municipal adoption and implementation of the Natural Step Program and the Whistler 2020 Comprehensive Sustainability Plan as well as the creation of a three person team to work on its implementation.
- The RMOW's major growth management measure was implementation of a bed unit cap on growth. Other measures included zoning bylaws to limit maximum house size, annexation of land adjacent to municipal boundaries to limit peripheral growth and implementation of various smart growth design techniques in some newly developed neighbourhoods.
- In order to address affordable housing, the RMOW's major strategy was the creation of the WHA to maintain the goal of housing 75% of the RMOWs workforce in the community. Additional measures included initiatives to integrate affordable housing stock throughout community neighbourhoods; development of occupancy and price restrictions, and right of first refusal on WHA maintained affordable housing stock, mandating businesses to provide accommodation for a percentage of their employees; zoning ordinances to allow for secondary suites with a cash in-lieu buy-out option and development of non-cost initiatives to allow property owners to subdivide their properties or stratify a portion of their homes for resale.
- A significant regional planning measure was the initiation of a regional growth management plan. The most important tool to regulate land use, in particular, to limit maximum developable house size and to protect viable farmland were zoning ordinances employed by the SLRD.

Interviewee comments generally reflected the particular issues prominent in their own locales. Thus the Lil'wat First Nations identified the effects of amenity migration to the RMOW and region as impinging on their traditional way of life. Some respondents focused on the long term effects of amenity migration on the environment. Still others, based in Whistler, were primarily concerned with the way in which effects of amenity migration impacted on Whistler's tourism industry. All effects were, however, seen as challenges, in particular maintaining affordable resident housing for 75% of the RMOW's workforce. Most interviewees anticipated the forthcoming Olympics as

providing both opportunities and challenges, including the development of improved regional partnerships that would be useful in addressing a range of issues. Some interviewees were very dubious about the free market's role in relation to the development of sustainable mountain communities. Most affirmed the importance of the concept of amenity migration for planning purposes and believed research on the nature of amenity migration could enable them to plan more effectively to manage growth.

6.3 Lessons from the Whistler Experience

The fourth goal of the study was to consider the lessons learned from the Whistler experience and the implications for the planning profession. From the perspective of the researcher, the following lessons were identified:

- The concept of amenity migration is becoming increasingly known, but was not evident in interviewees' responses nor in the planning policies and practices of the RMOW and region. Planners would be in a much stronger position to plan more effectively to manage growth and to monitor the changes related to amenity migration if the concept was prominent in their conceptualization of issues. They would be better able to strategize about ameliorating the effects and to forecast more accurately the nature of future growth if they acquired systematic knowledge about the types of amenity migrants in the community and the nature of their engagement with the community. Communities in earlier stages of development could anticipate more accurately the range of effects that might occur. Communities on the periphery of resort settings could apply the concept to understand the consequences of this type of growth for their locales.
- This study revealed that both the literature and interviewees tended to focus on the negative effects of amenity migration. There was also mention of a negative connotation to the term as suggestive of hedonism. Therefore, while the concept would be of use to planners if directly used in policy development, caution is advised regarding labeling people as amenity migrants.
- A community and region will be better able to address the negative effects of amenity migration if it articulates a strong vision based on extensive community participation. A longer term vision will also enable the community to identify what types of amenity migrants are desired in order to achieve a viable community as opposed to a single operator resort that attracts primarily tourists and affluent second-home owners who may reside only for temporary periods in the community. Moss (2003) and others have identified a strategic approach to planning for desired types of amenity migrants as an important goal to pursue if a community wishes to remain socially, environmentally and economically viable.

- The earlier a community takes the initiative to address the dilemmas of developing a cohesive and inclusive community in the face of absentee home owners and lack of affordable housing, the better. Once again, having a well-developed vision that has widespread community buy-in is critical to the community's success in pursuing its goals.
- The interests of resort developers and the emerging community may converge to some extent at various phases of the life cycle of a mountain resort community. However, the resort community needs to remain cognizant that the development industry is primarily pursuing a profit motive and the community must take forceful measures to require developers to make necessary contributions to promote the interests of the community as a whole. Provision of adequate affordable housing remains the primary concern in these settings.
- No community exists entirely on its own; effects of amenity migration in one community can have far-reaching consequences for other communities and the surrounding region. A comprehensive regional planning framework is absolutely necessary in order to offset negative "spill-over" consequences of growth and to optimize benefits.
- Where First Nations are involved, non-aboriginal communities and regions should be very clear about the past and ongoing losses experienced by these groups and the importance of proceeding without additional infringements on their lands and lifestyles.

The research findings and the lessons learned from the Whistler experience suggest the following implications for the planning profession, again from the perspective of the researcher:

- Educational curricula for planners need to give more attention to tourism, development of resort communities and planning in relation to amenity migration.
- Planners should be prepared to be strong advocates for the types of communities that support diverse populations where all individuals can be assured of having their basic needs met with respect to a dignified life style and adequate health, education and recreation benefits.
- Planners should be prepared to be mediators and negotiators among developers, politicians and residents in mountain resort communities that are evolving from single operator resort developments to more fully fledged communities.
- Planners should expect to show leadership in identifying required community resources and appropriate strategies if single resort development communities are to evolve into more viable communities that are capable of meeting the needs of a diverse group of residents.

- The trend for mountain resort developers to continue seeking new markets in the mountain west is not abating. In order to be more knowledgeable and better skilled in managing such growth and possibly preventing more degradation of the natural environment, planners should promote more research into questions pertaining to amenity migration to mountain resort communities.
- Planners need to develop more coalitions and partnerships with other professionals and groups who are concerned about the degradation of the environment and the homogenization of the mountain west to challenge those with opposing values.
- Finally, planners working in mountain resort communities face ongoing ethical issues related to the varied interests of multiple stakeholders. Planners must find a way to facilitate conflict resolution, while not compromising their commitment to promoting the well being of the community as well as protection of the natural environment.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

Given more resources, it would have been desirable to include a wider range of key stakeholders. In particular, the Squamish First Nations would undoubtedly have offered a useful perspective which may have differed from that of the Lil'wat First Nations. Additionally, one could have included an interview with a VANOC representative in order to obtain an Olympic organizer's perspective on impacts of the Olympics on the RMOW and region, including the possible implications related to amenity migration.

Although many of the stakeholders self-identified as amenity migrants during the interviews, insight into the amenity migration phenomenon could have been heightened through interviews with persons who presented primarily as amenity migrants.

Finally, more time for the analysis of the data might have yielded enhanced theoretical insights into the phenomenon of amenity migration and subsequent planning strategies.

6.4 Directions for Future Research

Interviewees made several suggestions for research pertaining to the phenomenon of amenity migration and related planning processes. These are outlined in Chapter 5,

Suggested Future Research. Williams and Gill (2006) have also identified numerous research questions that warrant attention. All of these proposed studies would contribute to a more developed understanding of amenity migration and its effects in mountain communities.

This study affirmed the importance of developing ways of tracking amenity migrants so that a community could monitor its growth more accurately. Additionally, one could follow a group of persons who meet the criteria of amenity migrants for a number of years in order to build a more accurate knowledge base regarding their engagement with the community.

The development of a series of comparative case studies might yield useful information on the effectiveness of various planning strategies and practices related to dealing with amenity migration.

Another direction for research might entail studying how tourism and amenity migration interface within different types of mountain communities. There are many questions that might be addressed, ranging from clarifying concepts related to tourism and amenity migration to understanding their interaction, and/or effects related to either phenomenon.

Finally, there might be continuing exploration of how various levels of government might be involved in dealing with aspects of amenity migration.

Without further research, mountain communities face substantial risks related to growth. Research that engages participants in identifying their own issues and strategies for meeting their goals should lessen the potential negative impacts of unplanned growth while also contributing to a community's sense of identity and empowerment.

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APPENDIX A: Behavioural Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval

		
The University of British Columbia Office of Research Services and Administration Behavioural Research Ethics Board		
<i>Certificate of Approval</i>		
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR Larice, M.	DEPARTMENT Comm & Regional Planning	NUMBER B04-0479
INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT		
CO-INVESTIGATORS: Gripton, Stuart, Comm & Regional Planning		
SPONSORING AGENCIES		
TITLE: The Social, Economic, and Environmental Effects of Amenity Migration and Tourism on the Resort Municipality of Whistler and Surrounding Environs		
APPROVAL DATE Sept. 13 2004	TERM (YEARS) 1	DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL Sept. 2004, Consent form / Telephone script
CERTIFICATION: The protocol describing the above-named project has been reviewed by the Committee and the experimental procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.  <i>Approval of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board by one of the following:</i> Dr. James Frankish, Chair, Dr. Cay Holbrook, Associate Chair, Dr. Susan Rowley, Associate Chair Dr. Anita Hubley, Associate Chair This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures		

APPENDIX B: Sample Interview Questions

The following questions were usually asked of interview participants.

- 1) Are you familiar with the concept of “amenity migration”? If so, what does it mean to you?
- 2) What are effects associated with “amenity migration”?
- 3) Do you believe amenity migration is occurring or has occurred in Whistler or the region? If so, what effects are associated with the phenomenon?
- 4) What planning measures have been employed by the Municipality to deal with challenges associated with the phenomenon of “amenity migration”?
- 5) What regional measures have been developed to deal with the phenomenon?
- 6) Is the concept of amenity migration useful for planning purposes in Whistler and the region? For planning in other areas?
- 7) What are future challenges for the RMOW and region?
- 8) What effects will hosting the Olympics have on the RMOW and region in relation to growth and amenity migration?
- 9) Please comment on the relationship of the RMOW and region with First Nations.