



Whistler Recreational Trails Strategy

RTS Topic: Trail Access and Staging

This topic covers how we access trails, where staging and/or parking areas are provided, and what amenities exist at trailheads.

Initial Directions

These 'initial directions' are being considered for implementation as next steps after the development of the RTS. They were developed based on the force field analysis and the background information below in this document, and with input from staff and these RMOW committees: the Trails Planning Working Group, the Whistler Bear Advisory Committee, the Forests and Wildlands Advisory Committee, and the Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee.

- Identify and prioritize potential staging area additions and enhancements, considering the analysis, background information, and Trail Access and Staging Guidelines contained below in this document.
- Add required amenities to high-use T2 (Informal) areas (at minimum) to alleviate some negative impacts and make these areas more desirable than T3 (Roadside) parking.
- Encourage use of existing under-utilized parking locations.
- Explore shuttle service options.
- Encourage and plan for the use of active transportation to access the trail network.
- Investigate pay parking solutions and implications for staging areas.

Force Field Analysis

Helping Forces

Helping forces are the positive internal and external factors affecting this topic area, including internal strengths/assets and external opportunities/levers.

- The valley is generally well covered by a wide variety of staging area types with T2 (Informal) and T3 (Roadside) areas filling in the main gaps in the T1 (Designated) network
- T1 designated parking areas are generally well distributed and provide many of the required amenities in addition to serving many different types of users
- T1's are the best opportunity to impart safety and other information
- T2 informal parking areas are largely well suited for the areas they serve and where they are located
- T3 roadside parking tends to fill in the gaps in the designated and informal network
- All types of staging areas are typically well utilized



- Existence of potential suitable staging locations to fill obvious gaps in the network
- Refreshing on street parking/no parking signage in residential areas has proven to be effective in managing recreational parking and reducing complaints
- Pay parking is an opportunity to generate revenue for trail components (staging areas, trail maintenance and repair)

Hindering Forces

Hindering forces are the negative internal and external factors affecting this topic area, including internal weaknesses/gaps and external threats.

- Many T1 designated parking areas are regularly filled to capacity during the primary summer season as they also are key for parks and lakes access
- Gaps in T1 and T2 network in key locations in some neighbourhoods has led to conflicts with local residents
- Busy T2 informal parking areas in high use locations without basic amenities can lead to negative impacts (public urination/defecation, littering, noise)
- Ongoing vehicle break ins at remote staging areas
- Capital costs of developing T1's, in addition to ongoing maintenance and servicing can be significant
- Gaps in T1 and T2 network in Alpine Meadows and Lower Sproatt/Nita areas could continue to fuel resident conflict
- Lack of required amenities at some high use T2 areas could lead to further negative environmental impacts
- Relying on T3 roadside parking areas in key trail network areas could exacerbate safety issues with recreational users impeding traffic or emergency response vehicles, can disrupt local residents, and can increase social and environmental impacts
- Pay parking can disperse parking to unwanted areas.

Background Information

This background information has informed the Force Field and Initial Directions. It has been reviewed by staff and the four RMOW committees (listed above) and refined based on their input.

Whistler offers a variety of recreational parking and staging locations from large-scale day lots in the center of the village to roadside parking (see Map 6 – Parking Location). In the context of the RTS, and for this analysis, parking areas are defined as staging areas that provide parking and staging for trail access. Places predominantly used for access to municipal lakefront parks, privately owned parking areas (eg Creekside underground, Nicklaus North Clubhouse), School District parking, and parking to non-trail based recreation opportunities (eg River of Golden Dreams pullout in Nicklaus North) were not considered. This does not negate the understanding that other areas may be used by the public for recreational trail access, however, recreational user numbers utilizing these parking areas are generally considered to be limited due to the distance from trailheads.



Review of Staging Areas

Whistler's current recreational trail staging can be generally categorized into three types:

- **Type 1: Designated Staging Areas:** feature a full suite of amenities to serve users who are traveling by to recreate in a general area and are typically attached to specific recreation or leisure destinations. Could be asphalt or gravel surfaced. Examples – Rainbow Falls/Lake on Alta Lake Road, Whistler Interpretive Forest at Highway 99
- **Type 2: Informal Staging Areas:** a gravel surfaced parking area capable of accommodating multiple vehicles, typically featuring a limited set of amenities. Example – Mons Road at Riverside Campground to access Disc Golf and Lost Lake Park
- **Type 3: Roadside Parking Areas:** utilized by trail users in residential neighbourhoods and less populated areas near trailheads or trails. May be managed by parking restriction signs but many in non-neighbourhood areas are unmanaged. Generally, very few if any amenities are provided in these locations. Examples – Alta Lake Road/Nita Lake Drive, Alta Lake Road/ Stonebridge Drive

Each parking area designation is detailed below.

Type 1 - Designated Staging Areas

Type 1 Designated Staging Areas (T1) generally feature organized parking and a broad suite of support amenities to serve users who are traveling to recreate in a general area. Typically, they are associated with a specific recreation, leisure destination or trail network areas. They serve residents and guests, act as a meeting and end point, typically provide washrooms, water sources, and recreation information to prepare for their outings.

The suite of amenities such as washrooms and garbage receptacles within T1s may provide for overnight vehicle parking to access overnight camping destinations such as the Rainbow Lake trail head. All municipal T1s are subject to municipal parking bylaws and enforcement preventing overnight vehicle camping in staging area. Crown land campsites may offer this amenity under the permissions of the *Land Act* allowing camping on Crown land for up to 14 consecutive days unless otherwise specified.

The majority of T1's located within the study area are managed by the RMOW, the Province, and occasionally by a third party. The cost of construction and operation for T1s are high due to the provision of a heightened level of service over other parking options and to minimize long term operating, maintenance, and lifecycle replacements costs.

In many instances, these staging areas are used by a range of user types and in some cases, the primary use of them is for activities not specifically related to recreation trail use or access. During busy summer months, some of these formalized staging areas see high use by both residents and visitors seeking access to destinations rather than trails including Whistler Village and various parks and lakes. T1's are generally detached from residential neighbourhoods or separated by short distances and buffered by treed vegetation, which can limit neighbourhood impacts.

T1 locations may also offer security benefits by being in populated or busy areas and possibly providing overhead lighting for personal safety.

T1s identified within Whistler that serve recreation trail networks are listed below with their related amenities in Table 1.



Table 1: T1- Designated Staging Areas within the RTS Study Area

Parking Area #	Name	Trail Network Area	Destination Trail	Land Manager Maintenance Responsibility	Comment	Connections	
						Valley Trail	Bus Transit
1	Cheakamus Lake Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheakamus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garibaldi Provincial Park trail network (Cheakamus Lake, Helm Creek) Whistler Interpretive Forest eastern trail network area 	BC Parks	Primarily parking for GPP users	No – Nearest Cheakamus Crossing	No – Nearest Cheakamus Crossing
2	Whistler Interpretive Forest (WIF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheakamus Westside Sproatt Whistler CRA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valley trail Sea to Sky trail Flank Trail from Function WIF trails 	RMOW maintenance responsibility through license agreement with RSTBC		Yes	Yes
3	Rainbow Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Westside Sproatt Westside Rainbow 	Secondary access to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Into the Mystic/Lord of the Squirrels Rainbow Trail Valley Trail 	RMOW	Primarily parking for Rainbow Park	Yes	Summer bus only
4 and 16	Rainbow Falls/Lake Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Westside Sproatt Westside Rainbow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rainbow Falls and Lake trails, Westside Sproatt/Rainbow trail network areas A River Runs Through It trail. 	RMOW	Also serves as no-cost overflow parking for Rainbow Park during summer park shuttle operating hours	No	No
5, 19, 20, 21 and 22	Village Day Lots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistler Valley Bottom Whistler CRA Blackcomb CRA Lost Lake Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost Lake Park Blackcomb CRA trails Valley Trail Sea to Sky Trail 	Day Lot Operating Committee partnership maintenance responsibility	Used for Whistler Village, Whistler Blackcomb, Audain Museum, Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, skateboard	Yes	Yes



Parking Area #	Name	Trail Network Area	Destination Trail	Land Manager Maintenance Responsibility	Comment	Connections	
						Valley Trail	Bus Transit
					and mountain bike skills park area.		
6	Lost Lake Park (beach?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistler Valley Bottom Whistler North Blackcomb CRA Lost Lake Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost Lake Park trails Whistler North trails Blackcomb CRA trails 	RMOW	Also acts as beach park access. Summer restrictions in effect.	Yes	Yes
7	Spruce Grove Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistler Valley Bottom Lost Lake Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost Lake Park trails Valley Trail 	RMOW	Lost Lake Park users, including baseball fields, community gardens, Waldorf School, Spruce Grove Field House facility, Valley Trail.	Yes	Yes
9	Wedgemount Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistler North 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wedgemount Lake trail 	BC Parks		No	No
10, 17 and 18	Bayly Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheakamus Jane Lakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Train Wreck Sea to Sky trail, 	Bayly Park and Sea to Sky/Train Wreck sites are RMOW maintenance responsibility	Numerous lots surrounding park area which includes use for BMX Track, Community Gardens, and the Andree Vajda Janyk sports field/dog off leash area. Also accommodates overflow from Cheakamus Crossing residents and the Whistler Sport Legacies	Yes	Yes
11	Alexander Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Callaghan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexander Falls Madeley Lake Hanging Lake 	RSTBC		No	No



Parking Area #	Name	Trail Network Area	Destination Trail	Land Manager Maintenance Responsibility	Comment	Connections	
						Valley Trail	Bus Transit
12	Whistler Olympic Park (Whistler Sports Legacies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Callaghan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Commercial trail network access winter and summer	Whistler Sport Legacies	Limited public trails access	No	No
13	Callaghan Lake Provincial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Callaghan Lake Provincial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ring/Conflict Lakes and paddle to Cirque Lake trail via Callaghan Lake	BC Parks		No	No
14	Meadow Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Westside RainbowWhistler Valley BottomRainbow/Emerald	<p>Provides 'close' bike access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Westside Rainbow trail network areaValley trail <p>Secondary hiker access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Skywalk trail	RMOW	Primarily serves the Sports Centre, fields, splash park, and the Valley trail. Also used for River of Golden Dreams access/egress	Yes	Yes
15	Day Lots - Upper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Blackcomb CRALost Lake Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Blackcomb CRA trails andoverflow for access to WB commercial trails.	Day Lot Operating Committee partnership maintenance responsibility	Limited use	Yes	Yes



Table 2: T1 Designated Staging Area Amenity Attributes

Designated Parking Area	Surface	Size	Overflow Parking	Amenities						Access		Connection			Managed by	Paid	Detached from Residential
				Washroom	Water	Food Trucks	Picnic Tables	Waste and Recycling	Trail Information Kiosk	Park	Lake/River /Waterfall	Summer Park Bus	Bus	Valley Trail			
Whistler Interpretive Forest	P	L	X	O	X		x	x	X	X			x	x	RMOW		x
Cheakamus Lake Trailhead	G			O						X	X				BC Parks		
Bayly Park (x3)	P & G		X	F	x*		x	x		X			x	x	RMOW		
Rainbow Park	G	L		F*	x*	x	x	x		X	X	x		x	RMOW	x	x
Rainbow Falls/Lake Trailhead	P	M		O					X			x		?	RMOW		x
Meadow Park (x2)	P	L		F	X		x	x	X	X	X	x	x	x	RMOW		
Spruce Grove Park	P	L		F	X		x	x	X	X	X		x	x	RMOW		
Village Day Lots (x5)	P	L	X	F*	x*		x	x	X*			x	x	x	Day Lot Operating Committee – WB & RMOW	x	x
Lost Lake Park - Beach	P	M		F	x*	x	x	x	X	X	X	x		x	RMOW		x
Alexander Falls	G	S		O							X				RSTBC		x
Whistler Olympic Park (Whistler Sports Legacies)	P	L		F*	X*				X*						RMOW	x	x
Callaghan Lake Park	G	L		O					X	X	X				BC Parks		
Ancient Cedars (semi formal)	G	S		O					X						RSTBC		
Wedgemount Lake Trailhead	G	S		O					X						BC Parks		
(P=Paved, G=Gravel)																	
(L=Large, M= Medium, S= Small)																	
(O=Outhouse)																	
* = near car park but not in (e.g. Park, Village)																	

L = Large (>40 parking stalls), M = Medium (10-40 parking stalls), S = Small (<10 parking stalls)



Type 2 - Informal Staging Area

Type 2 Informal Staging Areas (T2) are generally gravel parking lots capable of accommodating multiple vehicles without any formal parking organization. The locations typically serve adjacent destinations, trails, trailheads or access to a trail network area. Amenities, if at all present, are generally limited to a map kiosk and occasionally could include an outhouse or porta potty.

Use of informal areas is typical for locations on the outskirts of developed areas, where users are typically travelling shorter distances and come prepared for their activity. Users of T2 are generally familiar with the trail network but could be used by first-time visitors.

The municipality has no jurisdiction over existing T2's as they are located upon lands controlled by the Province (Ministry of Forests, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure) or are privately held. Relevant examples to the RTS project include the large gravel area south of Function Junction on the south side of Highway 99 to access Train Wreck via Lower Yer Saddle, or the area of the Cougar Mountain FSR/Highway 99, or many locations within the Whistler Interpretive Forest.

T2's may not be formally recognized by the overarching land manager and generally speaking are not regularly maintained. At a minimum, a map/information kiosk should be considered if authorized as it requires minimal maintenance and aids in route finding for unfamiliar recreation users.

T2's lacking associated amenities such as outhouse or waste and recycling receptacles can lead to impacts such as littering and public urination/defecation in the surrounding areas which are social, health and environmental concerns.

T2 - Informal Staging Areas (see Map 6) identified within Whistler that serve the recreation trail networks are listed below.



Table 3: Informal Staging Areas within the Whistler RTS boundaries

Parking Area #	Informal Staging Area	Description	Trail Network Area	Destinations and Key Trails	Overarching Land Manager	Comments	Connections	
							Valley Trail	Bus Transit
23 ,24, 28 31,32, 33,38,39	Whistler Interpretive Forest (various locations)	Dispersed medium and small sized lots along both sides of the Cheakamus River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheakamus Whistler CRA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logger's Lake MacLaurin's Crossing Suspension Bridge Riverside Farside Crater Loop Far Out/Flashback Highside Tunnel Vision It's Business Time 	RSTBC	Includes access to Loggers Lake and Jane Lakes	Yes, only Riverside/Farside	Yes, only Riverside /Farside
25	Lost Lake Mons Road	Large gravel parking area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost Lake Park Whistler North 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sea to Sky Trail Lost Lake Trails 	Private	Parking area for Lost Lake Disc Golf course and Riverside Campground	Yes	No
29	Callaghan FSR (South)	Gravel parking area at start of FSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A - Limited use as staging for the recreation trail network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cal-Check Sea to Sky Trail 	RSTBC	Typically used by kayakers and snowmobilers	No	No
30	Madeley Lake (Hanging Lake) Trailhead		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Callaghan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Madeley Lake Hanging Lake 	Whistler Sports Legacy	WSL established gate at junction of Callaghan FSR/Madeley Lake FSR further up Madeley Lake FSR to Madeley Lake trailhead	No	No
36	Cal-Cheak (Daisy Lake FSR)	Parking area adjacent to highway turn off, with dispersed areas further along FSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheakamus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cal-Check Sea to Sky Trail 	Cal-Cheak-RSTBC FSR - Ministry of Forests	Outhouses in designated recreation site camping areas	No	No



Parking Area #	Informal Staging Area	Description	Trail Network Area	Destinations and Key Trails	Overarching Land Manager	Comments	Connections	
							Valley Trail	Bus Transit
37	Brandywine FSR	Large snowmobile parking lot at the bottom of the FSR. Smaller gravel pullouts further up the FSR close to the Brandywine Meadows trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Brandywine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Brandywine Meadows Hiking trail	Overarching land manager - Ministry of Forests Limited winter maintenance provided by local snow mobile clubs	Road condition generally deteriorates closer to trailhead and requires high clearance 4x4 to reach	No	No
8	Ancient Cedars	Small gravel parking area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cougar MountainWestside Rainbow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ancient Cedars Hiking trailFlank Trail North	RSTBC		No	No



Type 3 - Roadside Parking

Type 3 Roadside and street parking (T3) occurs throughout the community in residential neighbourhoods and other less populated areas. This occurs on both municipal roads, private and forest roads, and along Highway 99, however this assessment recognises that only municipal roads are within the RMOWs remit. While on street parking areas is regulated by municipal bylaws, their use for recreation trail access is not specially managed by the municipality.

This type of parking is subject to municipal parking bylaws and enforcement and is generally permitted in a regulated fashion, although in certain locations has resulted in limited conflict with local residents. The conflict is typically the result of trail users seeking to access specific destination trails that lack designated and formalized staging areas, or the T1s are located far enough away from the trail access points such that it results in users preferring to seek parking closer to the trailhead. The distance from some T1s to trailheads can make them seem unreasonable for most users who prefer to park as close as possible to the trailhead to minimize travel time to the trailhead access point and maximize on trail time.

Impacts from roadside parking to access trail network areas and destination trails can include:

- Disruption of local residents from increased traffic in their neighbourhood;
- Reduction in availability of on street parking for residents and visitors;
- Parking in undesirable locations which can hinder emergency response vehicles;
- Lack of amenities such as adventure smart information, washrooms and/or garbage/recycling receptacles leading to increased social and environmental impacts;
- Increased noise levels

While this type of use happens throughout most of the developed portions of the community, the negative impacts related to roadside parking as it related to trail access have been particularly prevalent in three locations:

- Alpine Meadows neighbourhood. In this situation users seeking access to the Skywalk Trail network generally park on Mountain View and Valley Drives, or at the top of Alpine Way, all of which are space limited and lack any amenities.
- Stonebridge and Nita Lake Estates neighbourhoods. Here, users typically prefer to start their trips as close to, and at the highest possible elevation, to the Flank Trail/Into the Mystic climb which provides access to the popular Sproatt Mountain alpine trail network. The area surrounding Nita Lake Estates on Alta Lake Road sees available roadside locations frequently filled to capacity by recreation trail users. This contributes to negative impacts to adjacent residential properties and can create road safety issues.
- Blackcomb Benchlands. Here, users are avoiding paid parking in village lots 1-5, utilising Spearhead Drive and other roads to access recreational trails on Blackcomb, in Lost Lake, and the Whistler Bike Park as well as to access the Village and Upper Village.

In response to public complaints the RMOW installed improved signage to provide parking/no parking guidance and encourage respectful behaviour. This approach has proven successful and has been applied at localized “hot spots” across the municipality.



Table 4: Municipal T3 Roadside Parking Areas within the Study Area

Parking Area #	Roadside Parking Area	Description	Trail Network Area	Destinations and Key Trails	Comments	Connections	
						Valley Trail	Bus Transit
41,42, and 43	Alpine Meadows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alpine Way Mountain View Drive Valley Drive 	Roadside Parking area	Westside-Rainbow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skywalk Trail Network Howler Green Monster Billy Epic Zanarchy/Gargamel 	<p>Most public parking takes place at the top of Mountainview Drive and Alpine Way, and to a lesser degree on Valley Drive.</p> <p>All subject to municipal parking bylaws and enforcement.</p>	No	Yes
44 and 45	Stonebridge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stonebridge Drive Stonebridge Place 	Roadside Parking Area	Westside-Sproatt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sproatt Alpine Network Westside Flank Trails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheap Thrills Legalize it High Society Working Class Pura Vida Rockwork Orange-Korova Milk Bar-Wizard Burial Ground Danimal 	<p>Most public parking takes place at the top of Stonebridge Place and the bottom of Stonebridge Drive with some moderate levels near Beaver Pond/Danimal North on Stonebridge Drive.</p> <p>All subject to municipal parking bylaws and enforcement.</p>	No	No
46,47,49,50,51	Alta Lake Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alta Lake Road: Nita Lake Estates Scotia Creek Westside CN Rail Crossing 	Roadside Parking Area	Westside-Sproatt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sproatt Alpine Network Westside Flank Trails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower Sproatt/Piece of Cake Industrial Waste Three Birds ACDC Desert Platter Beaver Pond Danimal 	<p>Various locations between Nita Lake Estates and Rainbow Park</p> <p>Concentrated use adjacent to Nita Lake Estates.</p> <p>All subject to municipal parking bylaws and enforcement.</p>	Yes	No



Parking Area #	Roadside Parking Area	Description	Trail Network Area	Destinations and Key Trails	Comments	Connections	
						Valley Trail	Bus Transit
27	Wedge	Multiple gravel areas adjacent to highway access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistler North Cougar Mountain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kill Me Thrill Me Comfortably Numb Out There Parkhurst 	Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and RSTBC. Pull out on highway 99 not permitted by MOTI	No	No
47,48	Blackcomb Benchlands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Painted Cliff Spearhead Drive 	Roadside Parking Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackcomb CRA Lost Lake Park Whistler North 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost Lake Yummy Numby Foreplay Comfortably Numb Blackcomb CRA Trails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dark Crystal Micro Climate Crazy Train Hey Bud 	Various dispersed locations. All subject to municipal parking bylaws and enforcement.	Yes	Yes
50	Parkhurst-Hwy 99	Highway roadside parking pull-out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistler North 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parkhurst trails 	Pull out on highway 99 not permitted by MOTI	No	No
51	Southbound direction of Green Lake Lookout	Highway roadside parking pull-out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rainbow/Emerald 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White Knuckles climb and One Duck Lake trail 	Pull out on highway 99 not permitted by MOTI	Yes	No-closest Rainbow / Emerald
26	Cougar FSR/Hwy 99	Gravel area at start of FSR adjacent to Highway 99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rainbow/Emerald Cougar Mountain Whistler North 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parkhurst Park Kill Me Thrill Me Azreal Shit Happens 	Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Not approved by Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure	No	No



Parking Area #	Roadside Parking Area	Description	Trail Network Area	Destinations and Key Trails	Comments	Connections	
						Valley Trail	Bus Transit
35	Lower Yer Saddle - Hwy 99	Large gravel highway pullout south of Function Junction at Lower Yer Saddle trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cheakamus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lower yer SaddleTrain Wreck	<p>Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Not approved by Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure</p> <p>Pull out on highway 99 not permitted by MOTI</p>	No	No
40	Whistler Heli-Port/Welcome Sign-HWY 99	Small gravel parking area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cougar MountainWhistler North	<ul style="list-style-type: none">North Kill Me Thrill MeCougar Mountain trials moto area	<p>Primarily used by trials motorcycle riders and hikers to access Cougar Mountain network</p> <p>Pull out on highway 99 not permitted by MOTI</p>	No	No



Cost Recovery - Pay Parking

With the exception of the Village day lots and Rainbow, Lakeside, Wayside and Alpha Lake Parks during peak periods, there is currently no cost to park at existing T1, T2 and T3 locations within the RMOW. Parking revenues from the Village Day Lots is used to fund public transit and revenue from the Parks is used to fund the free summer shuttle service.

Provision of parking areas and the amenities associated with them can be a significant capital and annual maintenance cost.

Revenues generated from T1 and T2 locations could be used to offset costs for parking lot and associated amenity maintenance as well as broader municipal transit services and shuttle services as discussed above.

Benefits of Paid Parking for Recreational Staging Areas

The benefit of a pay parking program is that it can be used to incentivize more sustainable transportation options as outlined in the RMOW Official Community Plan (OCP) and Climate Action Big Moves Strategy. Paid parking can encourage faster user turnover and can aid in funding preferred transportation methods. These topics were investigated in more detail through the Whistler Summer Experience Plan 2021. As discussed above with the introduction of paid parking to these RMOW Parks, free park shuttle bus services were able to be provided and partially funded.

Paid parking at staging areas in desirable locations with amenities funded from parking fees could likely be advantageous to trail users. If a paid staging area was located at a higher elevation and closer to a primary trailhead than the existing roadside parking and provided shorter access to trailheads the parking fee may be justified by the user. Incentives for a paid staging area parking program could also consider passes purchased being applicable to other RMOW areas included in the fee (e.g. Rainbow Park and Village Day Lots).

Risks of Enforced Pay Parking for Recreational Staging Areas

The risks associated from introducing pay parking to trail staging areas, in absence of parking restrictions on streets and roads, could include the avoidance of these areas by users resulting in the increase of roadside parking in unregulated areas, resulting in many of the negative outcomes identified above. Examples of this have been observed on Alta Lake Road adjacent to Rainbow Park when pay parking was introduced, as well as in residential neighbourhoods close to the Village.

Resident Restricted Parking Permits

The municipality has previously explored the concept of a resident restricted neighbourhood parking pass, and at this time it is not being advanced. The general public has a right to park on municipal roads in designated locations, and all residential properties are required to have adequate private parking space on their property as part of the municipal Parking and Zoning Bylaw 303, 2015. Research in other jurisdictions confirms that a resident restricted neighbourhood parking pass program has considerable inherent administrative costs and day to day logistical challenges. Requests for such pass programs typically diminishes following improvements in roadside public parking guidance, enforcement, and respectful neighbourhood signage.

Alternative Transport Access Options

This review and guidelines primarily focuses on vehicular parking staging areas for access to trails by recreational users. However, some visitors to Whistler arrive using other means of public transport and may not have access to a car to access the trailhead staging areas for recreation. As stated in Whistler's



OCP “walking, cycling, transit and other preferred modes over the single occupant vehicle and private automobile. Whistler residents are also encouraged to use active transportation to “Move Beyond the Car” as stated in the municipality’s Climate Action Big Moves Strategy.

Alternative modes of trailhead access are considered in relation to the staging areas below, as well as a discussion of challenges these modes may present.

Active Transportation

Active transportation is human-powered transportation that connects the user to the staging area or trails either by walking, cycling or by a mode of transportation that provides a boost e.g. electric bikes (E-bikes). Walking or cycling to a public transit stop is also considered a part of active transportation.

The perceived expense of time available to complete the trail activity and ability to recreate for longer durations on the desired trail(s) also contributes to choosing more typical transportation options. This option could also be less convenient for larger groups or families with a broad range of ages and abilities. The active transportation could also be not suitable for some users who are not physically able to reach the desired trails, then complete their activity, and return to their starting point.

Valley Trail

The Valley Trail is a 50 km paved trail network that connects Whistle Village to residential neighborhoods, major parks, lakes, schools, commercial and employment centres, the Village and some trail access points. The Valley Trail is intended primarily as a recreational amenity, however it can also be used for active transportation purposes to recreational staging areas if used respectfully.

Staging areas have been analyzed for their connection to the Valley Trail and will be further considered in the SWOT analysis.

Bikes and E-Bikes

Personal, or rental use, of bikes and e-bikes is an increasingly viable option to access trail staging areas.

Currently, there is no comprehensive data for bicycle use to access trails and/or staging areas. However anecdotally, e-bike transport appears to be growing in popularity and that could extend to access to trailheads and staging areas. Many of the local bike shops offer e-bike rentals and the RMOW has permitted a trial period for a Valley Trail suitable e-bike paid share system at select locations throughout the community.

Utilizing e-bikes to access trails, trailheads, destination sites and trails where e-bikes are permitted is a viable option, current e-bike battery technology permits riding the Valley Trail from one end of the community to the other, riding a moderate length single track trail, and returning home on a single charge. An example of this would be a return trip originating in Cheakamus Crossing to Kill Me Thrill Me and back. Combining a user’s transportation and recreational modes eliminates the need for a vehicle and provision of parking.

For hiking, using a two-mode approach (bike and hike) a user could ride an e-bike (or traditional bike) to a hiking trail access point and then commence their hike. An example would be for a user to ride to the top of Alpine Way, continue riding up Rick’s Roost and the Flank Trail and parking their bike at the Skywalk Trail access point where they would commence their hike. This approach would eliminate 8km (return) and 350 metres of elevation gain along an old and less desirable FSR from an already lengthy hike. This approach requires secure bike parking at the trail access point and eliminates the need for vehicle parking.



Public Local Transit Bus and Shuttle

Many existing T1s have access to the municipal transit service stops, providing users alternative forms of access to these places. Transit connections can be identified in the previous tables for Type 1 Designated and Type 2 Informal Staging Areas.

All public transit buses offer bike racks to transport bikes. However, the capacity of the racks is limited to two bikes, and demand often exceeds capacity. This limitation is a disincentive to broader use amongst cyclists, especially larger groups, or families. Scheduled transit times also affect the ability to start or finish trail activities when required.

The RMOW provides a free summer park shuttle service between the end of June and Labour Day. Running between 10 am – 6 pm on weekends and holidays the service services several municipal parks and the following T1 staging areas:

- Village Day Lots
- Meadow Park
- Rainbow Falls and Lake Trail Access Point
- Rainbow Park
- Lost Lake Beach

Private Taxi, Ride Hailing and Shuttle Services

Private taxi, ride-hailing and paid shuttle services offer another mode option. This mode is preferred over private automobile use (Whistler's OCP), however it does present user challenges of carrying and storage of pre/post activity support gear.

Shuttle services have grown in popularity in other locations, typically offering a one-way or return service depending on characteristics unique to the location. Fee based shuttles at high demand National Parks in the United States are used as part of a visitor management strategy partly intended to restrict and manage personal vehicle use as well as for protection of environmental, park and guest experience values.

In BC, Parks Canada and BC Parks both permit the use of fee based return shuttle services to access privately operated accommodation lodges at Lake O'Hara and Cathedral Lakes as well as publically operated camping facilities and hiking trails. At both examples it is possible to hike without using the shuttle from parking to destination and back, however the shuttles provide an opportunity to expediently bypass what is otherwise a long and steep hike. The daily visitor shuttle capacity is capped thus providing a level of visitor management.

Elsewhere in BC there are examples of successful one-way shuttles. These are typically offered in the mountain bike community for high demand trails, particularly lengthy point to point or descent oriented rides where returning to the initial staging area is viable and part of the recreational objective. Typically these shuttles utilize an FSR to access the trail entry point. Examples include the private shuttle services to access the Seven Summits Trail near Rossland and the downhill riding oriented Diamond Head area of Squamish.

At present a commercial trail oriented shuttle services do not exist in Whistler, however there may be future potential opportunities as discussed below.

Potential Shuttle Opportunities

Whistler's trail network is somewhat limited by FSR access and consequently shuttle opportunities are constrained. That said opportunities could exist if the service targeted some combination of high demand areas, a broad vs singular user type, or addressed a distance or elevation issue and was supported by relevant land manager agencies with adequate road infrastructure.



Potential opportunities could include:

- Garibaldi Provincial Park (Wedgemount Lake), Comfortably Numb and Sea to Sky trailhead, the latter an opportunity for users to return to Whistler on the Comfortably Numb or Sea to Sky trails;
- Alpine Meadows to access the popular Skywalk Trail hiking network;
- Garibaldi Provincial Park (Singing Pass) access from the Village;
- Alta Lake Road/Stonebridge area to access the popular Sproatt Mountain and Westside Trails;
- Cheakamus Lake FSR accessing trails and destinations located within the Whistler Interpretive Forest and Garibaldi Provincial Park (Cheakamus Lake, Helm Creek Meadows, Panorama Ridge, Black Tusk).
- Madeley Lake trailhead offering users a one way hiking opportunity to the Village via Rainbow Lake
- Brandywine Meadows.



Trail Access and Staging Guidelines

Active and public transportation modes are prioritized and preferred over the use of personal vehicles as outlined in the RMOW Official Community Plan (OCP) and Climate Action Big Moves Strategy, although vehicle parking is still required for many recreational trail users. As such, parking and suitability locational guidelines have been produced based on the inventory of existing staging areas in the Whistler area. The guidelines are to inform the preferred geographic location and type of staging areas, the necessary scope of amenities provided and considerations of where staging may not be appropriate.

Staging Area Location Guidance

Distance and Elevation from Trailhead

Analysis of existing staging areas (see Map 4 Parking Analysis) found the distance of staging areas to trailheads plays an important role in their use. If the distance and elevation of trailheads from the nearest staging area is too great, recreational users tend to seek alternate roadside parking nearer to the trailheads.

The type of recreational activity can also affect locational guidelines for trail staging areas. Hikers generally desire a close distance from the staging area to the trailhead given the time it takes to walk, whereas mountain bikers will typically tolerate slightly larger distances due to the speed of travel.

Analysis of existing staging areas indicates that roadside parking areas appear to occur when major trailhead access locations are greater than 500 m in distance from a designated or informal staging area and/or when the elevation gain is 50 m or greater.

The RTS locational guidelines therefore suggest staging areas be located as close to the trailhead as possible. Destination hiking trail staging areas should ideally be located within 100 m of a trailhead with 0-10m elevation gain and mountain biking/trials be less than 500 m with an ideal maximum distance of 200 m – 300 with less than <50m elevation.

Staging Type

The decision to create a T1 with a broader set of amenities versus a T2 is highly dependent on location and anticipated use levels. T1s feature a higher standard of amenities which generally require a higher frequency of service and maintenance from the agency that maintains the staging area. T1s should be easy to get to, serve multiple trails, trailheads and destination trails while being capable of serving a high volume and variety of users.

T2s are best suited to less popular areas and places that are not adequately served by a T1, see lower levels of use, and are typically used by those who don't require the broader set of amenities featured at a T1.

T3 roadside parking subject to municipal regulations should only be considered when the trails are not often used (i.e. not high use or a destination trail), a parking area is not possible and when the network is targeting local community users over guests.

Avoidance of Residential Areas

All locations should consider adjacent residential use. Staging areas should be located on the outskirts of residential areas and ideally separated by vegetated buffers to minimize potential disturbances from the staging area.

Trail Difficulty from Staging Areas

Trails that connect staging areas to the trail network should ideally be located directly adjacent to the staging areas and at minimum be equal to the lowest rated trail difficulty in the network area. If this is not



achieved, users may seek out alternative roadside parking areas where easier trail access exists to the trail network.

This is especially important in trail network areas with longer distances (e.g. Sproatt and Rainbow Mountain alpine trail networks) as trail users seek to conserve effort on an easier access trail where possible. If appropriate trail access does not exist in the location of the staging area a suitable access trail should be planned and constructed to connect to the desired destination trail network.

A summary of Locational guidelines for recreational trail staging areas is provided in Table 3 below.

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Table 5: Staging Area Locational Guidelines Summary

Staging Area Location Considerations	RTS Guideline
Distance and elevation from trail access point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As near as possible to trail head start • < 100 m for hiking trail users • < 200-300 m preferred (500 m max) for mountain bike users • <=50m Elevation gain over these distances
Staging Area Type	<p>T1 Designated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High use levels (this can be informed by intensity of trail use and density of trails information, destination trail proximity, numbers of vehicles parking on roadside.) • Trailhead location • Serves multiple user groups and trailheads/areas • Suitable for non-resident/out of town users • Support destination sites and trails as well as trail network areas • Located to reduce or eliminate negative social and environmental impacts to residential and neighbourhood • Optimized for maintenance and servicing • Consideration for winter use <p>T2 Informal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower use levels • Located outside of residential areas • Areas not served by a T1 • Users less likely to require amenities to support their activity <p>T3 Road Side</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting resident users over guests • Lowest use levels
Residential areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure spatial separation to avoid visual and noise related impacts, consider maintaining vegetated buffers when considering T1 or T2 areas • Ensure adequate parking guidance and respectful neighbourhood signage in place
Access Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct access to trail(s) or network area via connector trails that match lowest rated trails in the area • Construct access trail if necessary to encourage use of T1 or T2 area

Staging Area Amenity and Considerations

T1 - Designated Staging Areas

T1s should require and consider the following amenities along with the institutional capacity for frequent servicing and maintenance.

Required amenities:

1. Parking Lot - asphalt or gravel – maximizing stall numbers
2. Washroom - serviced/flush, pit toilet or porta potty
3. Potable water
4. Information and map kiosk(s)
5. Waste and recycling facilities



Preferred additional amenities:

1. Picnic table(s)
2. Invasive species wash facility
3. Bike maintenance
4. Secure bike racks

Optional amenities:

1. Changing area
2. Secure lockers for gear
3. Public transit access
4. Valley trail access
5. Access for food trucks
6. Overnight parking – accessing potential overnight areas
7. Electric vehicle charging stations as per the Whistler EV Strategy (RMOW, 2022)
8. Bike share station
9. Security access gate

T2 - Informal Staging Areas

Guidelines for informal staging area include a parking surface and the following amenities:

Required Amenities:

1. Parking – gravel surface
2. Information and map Kiosk – Consider if >10 parking spots and moderate to high use area

Preferred additional amenities:

1. Outhouse – Consider Pit Toilet or Porta Potty if >10 parking spots and moderate to high-use area

Optional amenities:

1. Secure bike racks
2. Secure lockers
3. Public transit access
4. Valley trail access
5. Overnight parking
6. Security access gate
7. *Waste/recycle station*

T2s should be considered when a T1 is not suitable or possible. Examples include:

- When the available parking area is of limited size;
- The area is only used seasonally and only for trail access
- Servicing access is not feasible. Seasonal servicing of amenities may be considered if waste and recycling facilities are available in the summer but not during the winter due to seasonal use and access changes.
- Reduce roadside parking issues, and
- When access to a nearby T1 is available to utilize amenities or is supported by local business locations.



The size of the T2 can directly dictate use characteristics and potential amenities associated with that site. Small T2s that only accommodate a few vehicles and are remote in nature will likely remain without amenities, unless a specific need or issue dictates otherwise, while larger T2s that serve more users in higher use areas should likely consider provision of a broader range of amenities to serve the use appropriately to prevent potential impacts to the area.

T2s should not be considered when the typical trail use activity will be longer in duration, e.g. for destination trailheads where users will be parked for a long time, and necessitate a full range of amenities to prevent social and environmental impacts on the surrounding area.

Indicators to monitor include;

- Disruption of local residents from increased traffic and recreational users resulting in reduction of availability of parking for residents,
- Lack of amenities such as washrooms or garbage/recycling receptacles leading to increased social and environmental impacts
- Increased noise levels

Mitigation for impacts include:

- Increasing amenities if necessary and where possible
- Increasing management and educational signage at the staging area
- Consider non-staging additional amenities at certain trailheads in the wider trail network. This could include additional informational kiosks, picnic tables, benches or other suitable amenities. Examples of non-parking staging areas could include the trailhead of Into the Mystic and the terminus of the Lord of the Squirrels where recreational users tend to congregate, gather, and meet before either climbing to the Sproatt Alpine network or descending back to the valley from the Flank Trail.

T3 - Roadside Parking Areas:

Specific planning for roadside parking is not recommended, however, there may be situations where managing for roadside parking is preferred. For example, when the trails are not often used (i.e. not high use or a destination trail), a parking area is not suitable and when the network is targeting local community users over guests.

Where T3 parking naturally occurs monitoring for impacts is recommended.

Indicators to monitor include:

- Resident complaint volumes as a direct result of increased recreational users as recorded by Bylaw Services;
- Increased social and environmental impacts through lack of amenities such as washrooms or garbage/recycling receptacles

When repeated negative impacts occur, a gap analysis of staging areas should be triggered to identify the severity of conflict and develop appropriate mitigation measures, potentially considering the development of a T2 or T1.

Mitigation for impacts could include:

- Increasing roadside parking management including educational signage and enforcement
- Redirecting parking to a T1 or T2
- Increased communication and education (encouraging alternative methods of transportation, respectful behavior, direction to preferred parking areas)
- Assess potential to provide T1 or T2.
- Consider additional amenities at non-staging areas at including destination trailheads within the trail network as listed above for T2



Redirecting Parking

Existing parking opportunities not regularly utilized by recreation trail users could provide opportunities to redirect users from high demand or high conflict staging areas. This could include, at appropriate times, parking areas like the Creekside parking garage or school sites as used in Squamish and underutilized municipal parking assets (e.g. select parks and roads). Utilization of these areas is currently not occurring mainly due to the distance/elevation of these amenities from the trail access point and the availability of closer staging areas.

These alternate parking sites may be an opportunity worth exploring through discussions with facility owners, legal use agreements and public promotion.