### Whistler's

# VITALSIGNS®

### A COMMUNITY CHECK UP











# Who lives in our village of 100?

A snapshot of who lives here, what they do, how they get by.

# Do we have a sustainable future?

A measurement of how we're doing at supporting a sustainable environment.

# Is our community livable?

A measurement of how we're doing with community systems and services.

# Is everyone thriving?

A measurement of how well we serve the community, and how well the community serves us.

# Whistler's Vital Signs

# Taking the pulse of the community

### DE-SILOING IS KEY TO RECOGNIZING THAT LIFE INTERSECTS LIFE

Inside our committee meetings, we regularly spoke about three themes in intersecting ways, even if we rarely referred to it as intersectional. Conversation about mental health led to affordability, which led to housing, food costs, day care, recreation, and more. For quite some time, even in the non-profit world, we've siloed many different issues, but during COVID we saw unique collaborations develop. We know intersectionality is not going away, whether it's talking about personal experience or organizations. So, we did what we could to make this full Vital Signs report speak to the issues in a thematic, yet intersectional way.

We use the 17 Sustainable Development Goals to guide the community in creating and reaching targets that support all community members, whether it be in nature, the workplace, in our homes or in the systems we use. Each section of this report refers to the Sustainable Development Goals in effort to spark conversation and action. The goals are briefly summarized for a local perspective, however resources like targets, indicators, progress, and general information can be found at sdgs.un.org for a global perspective and at sdgcif-data-canada-oddcic-donnee.github. io for a national perspective.

#### **CONTACT US**

Through Vital Signs, Whistler's Non-profit Network and our grantees, we understand the issues Whistler faces as a community. If you are looking for ways to make a difference, Whistler Community Foundation can help. Contact us at info@whistlerfoundation.com



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GALS

































### What is decolonization?

A complex but necessary process that brings social change and looks to provide cultural safety for Indigenous Peoples. Colonization of Turtle Island (a.k.a. North America) meant that a group, mostly of European and Christian ancestry, took control of people who lived on the lands before them. Lands, resources, languages, cultures, artifacts, and relationships were often stolen or decimated using power over Indigenous Peoples, including emotional and physical violence. The impacts and actions of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples continues today.

There are many pieces to this work, including implementation of the 94 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) calls to action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. At ground level, we must recognize that decolonization is for everyone, and that supporting decolonization work is critical to moving the dial forward. Respect and advocacy for Indigenous self-determination is imperative to meaningful decolonization.

### COVID CONTEXT

In March of 2020. we watched as whole countries shut their doors and told their citizens to stay home - supply chains ceased, flights were grounded, Whistler Blackcomb's chairs stopped turning, and reports of hospitals maxed to capacity filled our news feeds. By March of 2021, Whistler residents were well on their way to having access to a vaccine. At the end of 2022, Whistler was experiencing similar historical problems that are now amplified by a growing disparity of wealth gained by some and lost by others during COVID.

### **Grant Story**

#### DECOLONIZING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

"We need to decolonize our recruitment and retention process and move toward an inclusive process. Specifically, working on language used in job descriptions, where job descriptions are being posted, how we interview, changes to needed requirements and experience, what references could look like and making sure all aspect of the process feel safe for Indigenous people." ~ Social Care Grant in Action Application from SLCC

Skwxwú7mesh Lílwat7úl Cultural Centre's (SLCC) People & Talent Manager Julie Cummings, worked closely with Tanina Williams, of amawilc to shift policies and procedures away from a colonial lens. Julie and Tanina plan to involve a Squamish Nation member in future work.

"The SLCC is a safe place for me to work. Knowing that you are committed to changing some of the ways things are done, like hiring, is why I applied to work here." ~ a new SLCC team member.

#### ENDANGERED LANGUAGES BEING ACTIVELY RECLAIMED IN THE AREA:

- Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim the traditional language of the Squamish People
- Ucwalmícwts the traditional language of the Lílwat People
- Preservation of oral languages may include the development of phonetic written language and active lessons within the respective communities.

Skwxwú7mesh Lílwat7úl Cultural Centre Established in 2008.

#### **Orange Shirt Day - September 30**

Wear your authentic orange shirt to let everyone know that "Every Child Matters", and to show compassion and support for survivors and families who lost children forever due to the atrocities of residential schools – the last of which closed in 1997.

With respect, we will learn from and will seek ways to honour the history, culture, language, and unceded lands of the people of the Squamish Nation and the people of the Lílwat Nation.

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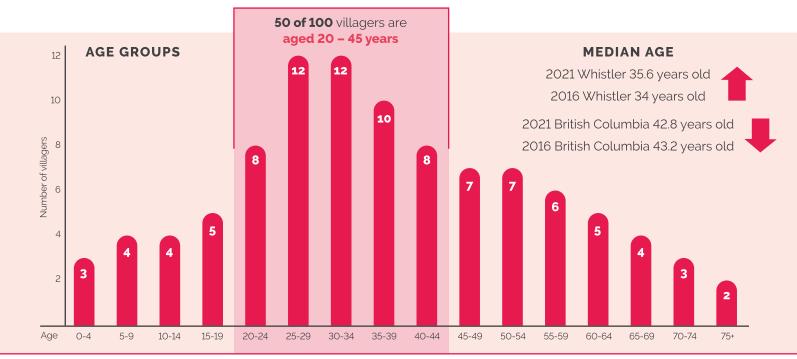
# Whistler's Village of 100

To help us compare and understand numbers, we chose to look at Whistler as if it was a village of 100 people. With this outlook, each person in Whistler's village of 100 represents 139.8 Whistlerites. Areas, like Squamish, are also represented in population of 100 as a comparison.

13,982 **2021 Whistler Population** 

FOR EVERY 100 RESIDENTS IN 2016, THE POPULATION INCREASED BY:





#### **PRIVATE DWELLINGS**

Whistler: **56** occupied by **usual residents** 44 not occupied by usual residents

Squamish:

93 occupied by usual residents

**Pemberton:** 

93 occupied by usual residents

**British** Columbia:



92 occupied by usual residents

In Whistler between 2011 and 2021, approximately 590 dwellings\* were newly built, at the same time the population increased by 4158 residents.

While Squamish built 2315 dwellings, for a population increase of 6061 residents.

\*Occupied private dwellings by period of construction 25% sample data StatsCan

#### MEDIAN TOTAL INCOME OF ECONOMIC **FAMILIES IN 2020**

One-parent economic families \$76,000

70% of one-parent families are led by a woman+

Couple-only

\$100.000

Couple-with-children

\$141.000

Persons aged 15+ **not living in an economic family** (e.g., living as a single person with or without roommates)

\$40,800

31 of 100 villagers are **not living in an economic family** 



StatsCan

#### **BC HOUSING DEFINES:**

\$128,810 gross income as the Low and Moderate Limit for residential units with two or more bedrooms for families with children.

\$82,310 gross income as the Low and Moderate Limit for residential units with less than two bedrooms for couples without children.

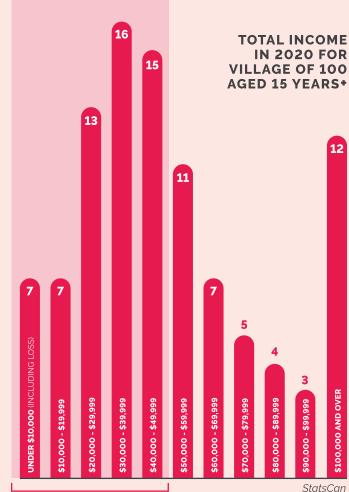
#### **MOBILITY STATUS**

Between May 2016 and 2021

Residents that changed address to or from another country

15 of 100 Whistler Residents 5 of 100 Squamish residents 6 of 100 British Columbia residents

StatsCan Mobility Status





**MOTHER TONGUE OF 100 VILLAGERS** English 19 Non-English

identified as First Nations, Metis, or Inuit.

identified an Indigenous language as their mother tongue.

> Indicators of endangered or extinct languages due to colonialism.

#### More than 45 different languages

were used as a mother tongue by residents



StatsCan 25% sample data

# Do we have a sustainable future?

We live in a world that has become increasingly anthropocentric - first and foremost we create meaning with humans in mind. Overconsumption is often driven by a lasting desire for economic growth. From the destruction of old growth forest to the loss of wetlands. Whistler has not been exempt from this tendency.

#### **POPULATION DENSITY**

per Square Kilometre









#### **OCCUPIED PRIVATE DWELLINGS**

58.3



**70.5%** are attached homes



StatsCan

WATER

**USAGE** 

29.5% are single detached homes

Attached dwellings aren't just more affordable, and consume less energy per person, they offer population density on a smaller patch of land, essentially leaving more space for the natural world.

#### **VEHICLES REGISTERED IN WHISTLER**

5351 total vehicles

commuting

That's 1 vehicle for every 2.3 **residents** aged 15 and over

#### 123 e-vehicles

That's 1 e-vehicle for



Residents who use a car, truck, or van as a main mode of

85% Squamish

81% Pemberton

#### WHISTLER'S GHG EMISSIONS (TONS)



68%

of GHG Emissions in Whistler are estimated to be

from passenger vehicle emissions in the

last 5 years, with the exception of 2020 when traffic dropped to levels unseen in Whistler for many years.

**462.11 litres per person per day\*** – approximately 96 flushes of a low flow toilet

#### LANDFILL WASTE >

**368 kg** per person per year\*

up from 2019 (lowest recorded) of 293kg

\*based on population equivalent (RMOW)



453,654 KG

OF WASTE DIVERTED

by Re-Use-It and Re-Build-It Centres in 2021 - That's a WIN!

#### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TARGETS



Uproot unsustainable patterns in food waste and our consumption of precious materials used in electronics including vehicles.



Listen to humanity's "code red" and take swift action to avoid climate catastrophe and the collapse of the economy and society.

# **Climate Action Vs. Climate Adaptation 20%** of the 4855 species recorded in Whistler's Biodiversity Project are **Fungi**

#### **BOTH ARE NECESSARY NOW**

We must take Climate Action to reduce further destruction of critical ecological habitats that help regulate the world's temperature and provide nutrients on earth. We're in a state of "code red" as we see the results of abuse on ecological systems compound. Citizens, corporations, and governments must protect and restore biodiversity—and consume and produce responsibly.

2017 BC We must use **Climate Adaptation** Wildfire State of to reduce human suffering. **Emergency lasted** Due to fluctuating weather 70 DAYS patterns, we need to adapt at a rapid pace, and civic life is behind schedule. Funding is imperative to adaptive measures like extreme weather shelters,

home air filtration systems, updating building codes, and preparing for climate refugees.

Whistler.

46 active beaver colonies in Whistler

267 estimated number of beavers

of original wetlands **LOST** 72% since development began RMOW Monitorina 2021

#### **INDICATOR SPECIES**

**KEYSTONE SPECIES** 

The Northern Goshawk is a raptor whose habitat is old growth forest. The lack of their presence in the valley indicates the health or existence of mature forests may be compromised.

Wetlands are vital to balancing our ecosystems. And

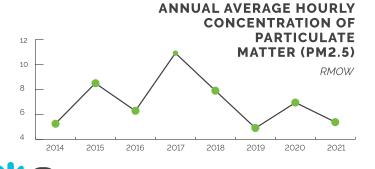
maintaining and creating wetlands. Protecting beavers, is

the key to biodiversity because each one provides habitat

for many species who live on land and below water in

beavers provide the necessary skills and tools for

Old growth forests are a buzz with biodiversity and we still have small patches that remain. While there is evidence that Goshawks have been present in the Whistler Valley, it's touch and go for revitalizing the population. Maintaining old growth in the stretch between Whistler and Pemberton is critical to encouraging breeding pairs in building new nests.



#### **EXTREME WEATHER CENTRE**

groups used overnight shelter services in 2021

70+

visits to the warming space during the day

**WCSS** 





Restore and protect our land-based ecosystems by managing forests, reducing land overuse, and halting biodiversity loss.

# Is our community livable?

A livable community provides and prioritizes affordability and personal independence, economic opportunity, safe and secure living conditions, justice, choice of mobility options, including active and public transit, and fosters a sense of community — allowing residents of all ages and backgrounds to thrive and engage in civic, economic, and social life.



"The Route 10 Valley Express has proven to be very popular with Whistlerites, the report noted, as the line's ridership **grew by 175 per cent** between 2019 and 2021, making it the fifth busiest route overall, and the only route to increase in ridership during the pandemic." - Pique Newsmagazine, 2022



WHISTLER TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

1,494,286

1,415,026

3,189,769

137 DAYS commuters went without access to transit in Whistler in 2022 due to a transit at all

Regular transit users experienced greater time poverty in accessing, groceries, healthcare, employment and more due to the complexity of arranging transport or using active transportation to travel to multiple destinations during the strike.

Barriers to accessing employment, healthcare, childcare, and social connections are significantly reduced when transit affordability, locality of service, frequency and accessibility for different abilities improves.

"The waitlist time for children under 3 years of age at one of the providers is 18 - 24 months."

- Whistler Childcare Planning Project - Final Report, RMOW, August 2020

#### **CHILDCARE RATE OF ACCESS**

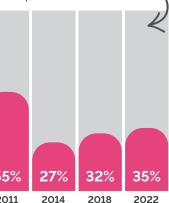
Number of licensed daycare spaces per 100 children.

Whistler **Pemberton** 

**Squamish** 

#### **MUNICIPAL ELECTION** 2022

65% of eligible voters in Whistler did not make it to the polls.



When asked in the 2022 RMOW Community Life Survey "How satisfied are you with the existing opportunities to provide input to municipal decision making in Whistler?"

Half of Whistler permanent residents

#### felt somewhat or very satisfied.

A question about whether the same residents voted in the 2022 municipal election, or not, would be an interesting exercise. However, the study was limited in scope.

#### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TARGETS



Protect water-related ecosystems and monitor drinking water to ensure access to plentiful, affordable, safe water without contaminants.



Build and maintain energy systems and infrastructure to provide access to an affordable mix of renewable and clean energy.

#### **PEACE COUNSELLORS SUPPORTED**



490 Children & youth through one to one counselling



277 Children & youth through groups



**342 students** (Grade 5 – 8) through Believe presentations which focus on education around healthy relationships, personal safety, and resources.

HSWC serves Squamish, Whistler, and Pemberton.



#### **RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION STUDY SEA-TO-SKY REGION**

of survey participants who identified as racialized **had experienced** racism while living here

Of those survey respondents who have experienced racism:

#### 44% would report the incident

Whistler Multicultural Society and ResilienceBC Anti-Racism Network

#### **MENTAL-HEALTH FLAGS**

"I started to see it more prevalent; we started to see it more serious in nature," she said. "When people were in mental health crisis, they were in serious mental health crisis where they had either attempted to take their lives or people were in violent states, from which they required police attendance and police intervention to ensure the safety of not only themselves but everybody else around them, including my members on my team."

- Sargent Banks, RCMP Committee of the Whole presentation

#### **COLLABORATION IS CENTRAL** TO A LIVABLE COMMUNITY



insecurity. It was a strong commitment by those involved to be focused on not being right but rather coming together to do the right thing." Jackie Dickinson, Executive Director, Whistler Community Services Society

groups to bring together the social prescription, shelter those who are homeless in extreme weather events and coordinate community health responses to address hunger, high density housing, and financial

> Whistler RCMP in a Committee of the Whole presentation called 2021 "very unusual" in terms of statistics - as the community continued to feel the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **VIOLENT CRIMES REPORTED**



#### **2021 CALLS FOR SERVICE** TO WHISTLER RCMP

**4517 CALLS** 

2% increase since from 2020



**Property** Crime 351 in 2021 423 in 2020

Traffic Offenses Crimes 102 in 2021 18 in 2021 139 in 2020 41 in 2020

Mental Health 185 in 2021 60 in 2016

13%

Promote justice and



Promote inclusive and environmentally suitable infrastructure and industries with the capacity to diversify and innovate.



**Enabling community** members to build strong connections in neighbourhoods to support one another



# Is everyone thriving?

Thriving people feel autonomy over food and housing needs, economic stability, physical and mental health. Community members feel welcomed and comfortable in all home, work,

and community spaces where they can contribute positively and proactively. Everyone feels empowered and supported in managing the challenges life throws their way with resiliency and can see the same for their future.

#### **FOOD BANK VISITS**

2021 9,365 5,782 2020 3,005 2019 2018 2,773

According to Gizem Kaya, food security and community development manager at WCSS, many individuals have gone from being food donors to visitors at the food bank. "There is no help for people... other than food banks which were meant to be a temporary solution," she said, "and now it's quickly becoming a very permanent solution." ~ excerpt from CBC News article **"Food bank visits**" hit record high at luxury ski town in B.C." from December 2022



16.9% Food cost increase in 2022' 16.7% Shelter costs increase in 2022'



\*BC rates used in calculating Vancouver's 2022 liveable wage

#### WHAT IS A LIVING WAGE?

A living wage is calculated in an hourly rate and offers a picture of what it takes to live a "bare-bones" life. The current methodology includes a contingency fund, but does not include loan or interest payments, retirement savings, home ownership, savings for children's future education, anything beyond minimal recreation, entertainment or holidays. And it does not cover costs of caring for a disabled, seriously ill, or elderly family member.

WHISTLER 2019

Per hour per adult at 35 hours per week 52 weeks per year based on a two-earner family with two children

RMOW Economic Development Team 2019 "Whistler's Living Wage" Presentation

If Whistler's living wage grew at a similar pace to Vancouver's living wage assessment, we could imagine a 17.3% increase over the last year. However, Whistler's last calculation was 2019.

WHISTLER ESTIMATED

Resort Municipalities Living Wage\*

**REVELSTOKE 2022** \$23.60

**GOLDEN 2022** 

**FERNIE 2022** 

"Housing is considered affordable when

30% or less of your household's

gross income goes towards paying for your housing costs."

- BC Housing

#### MARKET HOUSING

median purchase price in 2021

**\$3.3M** SINGLE FAMILY HOME

\$1,306,000 **TOWNHOUSE** 

\$770,000 **APARTMENT** 

\$201,938

is the purchase price of an affordable home for household income of \$100K.

**25%** is **below \$60,000** 

**50%** is **below \$100,000** 

TOTAL

INCOME

**HOUSEHOLD** 

Calculated using \$100,000 total household income, a 5% interest rate, a \$30,000 down payment, and \$2,500 in monthly non-shelter related expenses. CHMC calculator.

**WHA RESALES** IN 2022

median WHA resale price in 2022

\$276,326

\$405,000 - \$460,000

WHA NEW APARTMENT

SALES IN 2022

range price for 2-bedroom new build in 2022

\$1,500

The amount of rent that Whistler households with a total income of \$60,000 can afford, if renters keep monthly nonshelter related expenses below \$2,000 - according to CHMC Calculator

\$1.500

The median rate in 2022 for a WHA 1 bed rental with a couple or single occupant and a total household income of \$60,000 - according to WHA calculator

average wait time for WHA 1 bedroom rental

**NEW!** "An individual who is employed or self-employed a minimum average of at least 30 hours per week on an annualized basis by a Qualified Whistler Business."

Whistler Housing Authority updated the definition of employee for the rental & purchase waitlists.

of dwellings in Whistler do not meet StatsCan "acceptable housing" criteria. According to StatsCan, acceptable housing means residents spend less than 30% of income on **shelter costs**, the dwellings are suitable in size and type, and the dwellings are in good repair



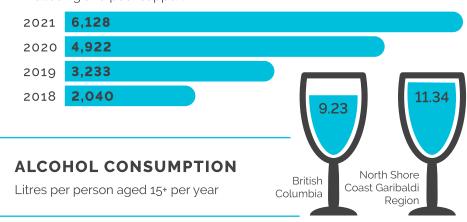
"HSWC intends to continue to work towards reducing barriers for **genderdiverse folks** to access our programs and services.

Data shows that gender-diverse individuals face higher rates of violence than cis-gendered individuals and HSWC is working to ensure that all people who experience violence, harassment and discrimination as a result of their gender have access to safe, supportive and healing care in our community."



#### WHISTLER COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY OUTREACH SERVICES

Number of visits at one-on-one or group sessions for mental and emotional wellbeing and peer support.



#### **COMMUNITIES THAT CARE WHISTLER 2021**

Prevention Needs Assessment Survey of Grades 6 - 12



7 of 10 respondents are confident in accessing mental health services in their community

42% of grade 10 students reported going to school drunk or high in Whistler – a number well above Sea to Sky's average of 23%.

Nearly 1/4 of respondents felt sad or hopeless over a two week period with 10% seriously considering suicide, and closer to 20% of grade 8 students having suicidal thoughts.

Young Adult Online Survey of persons aged 18 - 30 who live or work in Whistler (898 respondents)

31% reported binge drinking (consuming five or more drinks on one occasion) at least once per week over the last month

7% report using cocaine at least once per week, and a further 13% once or twice per month

10% had witnessed an overdose since living in Whistler, and 3% reported overdosing themselves

#### Alcohol

most commonly used substance

74%

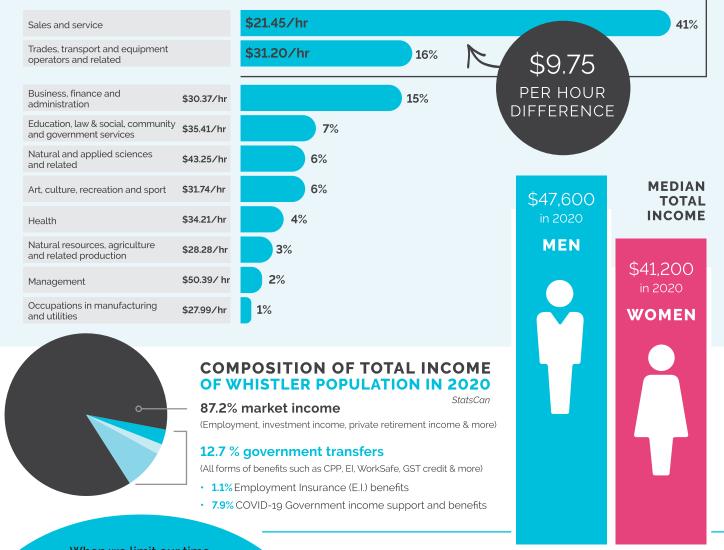
at least once per week

## WHISTLER LABOUR FORCE AGED 15 YEARS+ BY OCCUPATION

BC average hourly wage rate for all employee types - StatsCan



of population aged 15 years+ participate in the labour force



When we limit our time
to people with similar economic
status, political affiliation, countries
of origin, skin tone, languages,
physical and mental abilities, and
views on gender and sexuality,
we quickly develop a short-sighted
view of life. Experiencing and
accepting difference is critical to
community development.

During the pandemic (2020 & 2021) Pique Newsmagazine reported multiple organizations (including Whistler Community Services Society, Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre and Whistler Multicultural Centre) and community members experienced and witnessed a heightened level of racist incidents, including micro-aggressions and hate-speech.

#### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TARGETS



Ensure people who identify as women+ enjoy full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership, economic growth, and community life.



Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all abilities, identities, cultures, and ages.



Reduce economic disparity between the bottom 40% of income and the top 40% of income and promote the social, economic, & political inclusion of all community members.



Make our communities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

# Committee Take Away

Our Vital Signs committee met regularly in person to discuss the contents of the report. We heard many stories that led us to ask the three questions that helped us fill the themes of this report with numbers and commentary that will make you think.

Is everyone thriving?

The hard answer is no.

Not everyone
is thriving.

One of the most difficult questions for many on our committee was "Is everyone thriving?". The hard answer is no. Not everyone is thriving. While income is growing in Whistler, living expenses are growing faster. And while we found that few people are living below the national poverty line, Whistler struggles to house, transport, feed, and provide a livable wage, and supply healthcare to the folks hoping to continue to call Whistler home. This is especially true in times of ever-increasing extreme weather events, a bigger housing crisis than ever before and a looming recession.

#### A Gathering of Information

We looked at indicators provided by Statistics Canada (StatsCan) within the Whistler and surrounding communities census profiles for 2021 and other relevant years. And consulted the annual reports and statistical information provided by non-profits and governmental organizations. When numerical data was unavailable or inadequate in telling a comprehensive story, we added insight into lived experiences and best community practices.

Because this report is to inspire action, not all statistics were included. It's representative of what we, as citizens, saw in the data which is often compared to what we as a community see on the ground. A supplemental with resources can be found at **whistlerfoundation.com**.





#### **Acknowledgements**

This report was made possible by the support and collaboration of funders, stakeholders, community members, and WCF team. We are extremely grateful for the time and care that each person contributed from gathering data, participating in Vital Cafes, providing financial support, and volunteering on the Vital Signs Committee.

The information within is the product of our team taking an unbiased view of what is happening in Whistler and using the mantra What? (indicator), So What? (why is this important), and Now What? (advocate for action) with the hope that the community as a whole is inspired to create evidence-based, locally relevant solutions to improve the quality of life.

#### VITAL SIGNS COMMITTEE

#### PROJECT STAFF

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Community members and stakeholders who gave their time to participate in our consultations and/or assist with the provision of data, including recent Vital Signs staff and volunteers:

Libby McKeever, Anne Townley, Chris Wrightson, Lizi McLoughlin, Sue Maxwell, Susie Wood and WCF Board of Directors.

**SPONSOR** 



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# What's Next? →

While reading this report, we hope you consider ways to take action on things you find inspiring, shocking or corroborates your experience living in Whistler.

Here are a few ways to take action:

#### **Participate**

Community engagement opportunities are abundant. Try surveys, Vital Cafes, RMOW council meetings, Parent Advisory Committees, and others to find where you can make an impact.

# Volunteer or Donate

Choose non-profits and charities who support causes you care about most.

#### **Advocate**

Call for systems change at local, provincial and federal governments with data.

#### Collaborate

Tackle important community concerns together.

#### Invite

Request a Vital Signs café or presentation at your workplace.

#### Learn

Take opportunities to find out more about Sustainable Development Goals at sdgs.un.org/goals.







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#### whistlerfoundation.com

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Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

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