

SQUAMISH



2009 Planning Department Annual Report



2009 Planning Department Annual Report

The District of Squamish Planning Department’s Mandate

Provide for the long-term sustainability of the community by balancing current opportunities for growth and densification, with elements that contribute to the overall livability of the community

- ◆ Uphold the community’s future goals and aspirations
- ◆ Evaluate emerging trends and technologies against the long-term vision for the community
- ◆ Secure long-term amenities for the community through the development approval process
- ◆ Ensure that municipal policies and regulations are progressive and enable the community to evolve as planned
- ◆ Provide increased opportunities for effective and meaningful participation in the community planning process
- ◆ Provide professional expertise and services that further the organization’s goals
- ◆ Effective and informed Community Involvement

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Executive Summary

This report has been written to provide a broad overview of the Planning Department's role and to provide insight on the work of the Department in the following areas:

- ◆ Customer service and community engagement
- ◆ Major policy work
- ◆ Development activity for the period 2005-2009
- ◆ Goals and objectives for 2010

In 2008 global economic downturns and the resulting lending crisis saw new development applications come to a virtual halt. This trend continued into 2009. These changing times allowed the Planning Department to shift the workload from predominantly processing development applications, to a more balanced mix that includes focusing on developing and implementing much needed policies. In 2009 Council and Planning made policy development a priority and significant progress was made on a number of projects.

Customer service and community consultation remained a core priority for the Department in 2009 with a steady flow of citizen and developer inquiries for ongoing projects and consultation processes related to planning policy work. A number of open houses and public presentations, as well as professional presentations were held to inform and elicit feedback on the work of the Department.

As outlined in the Major Policy section, the Department spends a significant portion of time deriving policies and strategies for building the community. From the Official Community Plan, Oceanfront Planning Process, and Downtown Neighbourhood Plan to the innovative work on Community Energy Action Plan, the Planning Department is currently working on many crucial policies, that once complete, will help to guide the future of Squamish for decades to come.

Though development slowed in mid-2008, the period from 2005 – 2009 Squamish has seen a drastic increase in the amount of development, both residential, commercial and Industrial. Throughout 2009 residential development slowed, however Commercial development activity contrastingly increased over previous years. Indicative of Council and Staff's successful policy work, the Downtown was hottest area for residential development during that period whereas the Industrial Park and Garibaldi Village Commercial area has seen the most approved development for the Commercial/Industrial sector.

Looking forward to 2010 the Planning Department will focus on the completion of many of the major policy pieces currently underway and will mobilize to prepare for projected increases in development activity. The Department's Strategic Plan also prioritizes community engagement and communication through innovative means, improving customer service through an efficient and effective development process, and managing major externalities such as the Garibaldi at Squamish project.



About Us

Cameron Chalmers MCIP Director of Planning

Leading the District's planning efforts since 2002 Cameron and his Planning Team have been responsible for the policy and long-range planning as well as the development approvals process. Before joining the District, Cameron spent five years learning and working in Calgary Alberta. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (First Class Honours) from Simon Fraser University and a Masters of Environmental Design (Planning) from the University of Calgary. Cameron is also graduate of the Leadership Sea-to-Sky program and the Aspen Institute's Executive Seminar.

Sabina FooFat MCIP Planner

Sabina played bass in a classical orchestra for 10 years, and drove a 6-wheeler bus on the Athabasca glacier before she completed a Masters Degree in Urban Planning at the University of Toronto. Originally from Calgary, the opportunity of living and playing in small mountain towns like Banff, Canmore, Lake Louise and Golden motivated her to be a municipal Planner. Sabina absolutely loves Squamish, and has walked or biked to work since she moved here in May 2004.

Jim Charlebois Planner

Originally from Northwestern Ontario, home to the Sleeping Giant and killer black-flies, Jim moved to Toronto to complete an undergraduate Planning degree at Ryerson University before heading west to Vancouver in 1993. Four years later, he decided to return to school to complete a Masters Degree in Urban and Rural Planning at Dalhousie University in Halifax, where he received a Masters Thesis Award from the Department of Urban and Rural Planning in 1999. In 2001, Jim returned to the Lower Mainland and has worked as a Planner for the District of Maple Ridge for 5 years, prior to joining the Squamish Planning Department in 2008. Since 2007, Jim has spent most of his free time making sure that his dog Finn is too tired to eat the vacuum cleaner, again.





Chris Bishop Planner

Chris has appreciated all that the Sea-to-Sky corridor has to offer his entire life. Born and raised in North Vancouver, Chris and his family have recreated in the area since the mid 1970's. The first mountain bike trail he rode in Squamish was Slurm, Seven-Up and 8-ball in 1989. After finishing a degree in Geography at Simon Fraser University with certificates in Urban Studies and Liberal Arts in 1994, Chris was recruited by the Resort Municipality of Whistler where he worked in the Planning Department for 10 years. He then joined the Squamish Planning Department in 2006. Chris loves outdoor recreation; he was on the Junior National Cross Country ski team in 1992, and with the support of his wife and two young sons, continues to be a top local finisher in races like the Test of Metal, the Gear Jammer, and the Squamish Triathlon.

Dava Gustason Planning Clerk

Dava was born and raised in Vancouver, however after living in many different areas around B.C. she and her family settled in Squamish in late 1975. She has been with the District of Squamish since 1988 and has been working within the Planning Department long before the District's First Planner ever came on board. Dava is responsible for receiving and processing development applications; zoning enquiries and enjoys keeping the Planners on their toes.

Natalie Scopaz Part Time Planning Secretary

After completing a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Western Ontario (Eastern Philosophy), Natalie moved south to Nicaragua to fine tune her Spanish and Surfing Skills. She later returned, and went on to complete four years of Training at the Vancouver Homeopathic Academy. Natalie enjoys her Homeopathic practice within Squamish and Vancouver, and is currently working on her Homeopathic Masters. In addition to her Homeopathic education, Natalie has previously worked in the areas of mining Engineering, Civil Engineering; and recently made the transition over to Planning to explore a new interest. Natalie is responsible for designing and publishing all planning related annual reports and handbooks, and spends her free time outdoors with her family.



Planning Department Overview

The Planning Department is committed to providing quality customer service and community engagement. We are responsible for providing planning information and advice to the community, developers, stakeholders and Council. The Department employs a number of methods to engage the community in determining its future.

The Planning Department is responsible for long range planning, which establishes and evolves the regulations, policies and strategies for building the community physically, socially, and economically. Over the last several years, and in 2009 in particular, the Department made significant advances in establishing a strong policy set, deeply rooted in Smart Growth and sustainability to guide the future of the community. The planning policy work of the District is inherently public and as part of this work, the Department organizes and coordinates community engagement programs to involve the community in determining it's future.

In addition, The Planning Department processes current development applications (OCP amendments, rezonings, development permits, variances). The Department is responsible for technical planning analysis, coordinating the development process among internal departments and external stakeholders, and working with the developer and the community throughout the process from initial conceptualization through to construction. As part of the development application process, the Department chairs the District's Technical Planning Committee and also manages the Advisory Design Panel.





Community Engagement and Customer Service

Community Engagement and Customer Service

The Planning Department places a high priority on community involvement and outreach. It is imperative the development and implementation of policies and strategies reflect public opinion. In order to fulfill this priority, the staff at the Planning Department hold workshops to increase public knowledge and awareness on a variety of topics. In addition to hosting seminars, the staff do their best to attend in seminars as well to further. This ensures they stay current on many new and innovative techniques and methods being used around the world today. The following is a list of community and external events/presentations for 2009.

Event /Presentation	Date (2009)
Oceanfront 101 Community Presentation	January 14
Langara Applied Planning Program - Student Tour UMBC	February 6
BC Sustainable Communities Conference in Kelowna	February 24-27
BIA Annual General Meeting - Keynote Address	February 26
Prince George Smart Growth on the ground Open House	March 3 -4
Cascadia Green Buildings Workshop	March 18
Oceanfront Open House	March 26
Presentation and Q's and A's RE: Prince George Smart Growth on the Ground Seminar	May 28
BC Land Summit Delegate Tour of Downtown Squamish	May 20
Opening Address - Dr. David Suzuki	May 22
District of Squamish Town Hall Meeting	June 23
CMHC Round Table Whistler	June 25
Squamish Climate Action Network Movie Series	September 14
Squamish Climate Action Network Presentation on District Energy	September 28
Official Community Plan Meeting	October 14
Official Community Plan Meeting	October 15
Green Skyline Tour - Vancouver's Green Commercial Buildings	October 22
Oceanfront Open House	October 29
Langara Applied Planning Program - Guest Speaker	November 19

Day to day customer service plays an important role in the planning Departments day to day activities. From residents wanting more information about what is happening in their community, through to prospective land developers meeting with Planners to discuss future developments, the planning Department is a very active and lively part of Municipal Hall.

In 2009 the Department made headway on providing more information on-line to provide better service to the public. A consolidated Zoning Bylaw has been made available online for easy access. Standard forms for development applications, Rezoning's and Other informational tools have likewise been added to the District web site for everyone's convenience.

In November of 2009 the Planning Department started Tracking and Analyzing Customer service inquires to identify the needs, and common interest's of it's patrons. We are currently working to process this information in a systematic way, in order to help continually offer the most knowledgeable, concise and efficient information to the public.



Policy

Perhaps the most important role of the Department is its commitment to long term strategic and land use policy development. A strong integrated policy set is critical to communicating clearly with the community, landowners and Council about the future of the Municipality. It is the tool that Council uses to make decisions about land-use and development to ensure that each individual decisions fits within a larger vision of the community. Strong policy also creates efficiency in dealing with landowners and developers when the regulations are clear, predictable, and reflective of the aspirations of the community and Council.

To that end, the Department has been engaged in several major planning policy projects over the last several years to guide the community through a series of engagements to define the future of the community. From visioning sessions as part of the Official Community Plan (OCP) Review or Oceanfront Planning Process, to detailed land use planning in the Downtown Neighbourhood Plan, or technical studies as part of the Community Energy Action Plan, the Department has engaged Council and the Community in significant policy development in 2009.

The following section provides a summary of each of the major policy projects currently underway in the Planning Department.

Official Community Plan

Overview



The Official Community Plan update is an important policy exercise to determine land-use and social planning policy for the Community over the next 25 years. This process began in 2003, and took off in earnest in 2005 following the completion of the District of Squamish Growth Management Strategy. The Growth Management Strategy was considered a necessary precursor to the OCP review.

The new OCP will establish a land-use policy framework, built on the foundations of sustainability and Smart Growth. These policy directions, informed by the detailed geographical and forecasting conducted in the Growth Management Strategy, will establish a framework for land-use and social planning through to the year 2031. The OCP identifies lands that are considered developable, and differentiates general land-use classifications. Set of policies are then instilled about how the District can manage and approach growth over the next several decades. The OCP is considered the visionary document of Squamish's future and is intended to capture the community's aspirations for years to come.

In December of 2008, the newly-elected Squamish Council identified the completion of the Official Community Plan as one of their top priorities for 2009. Their target was to have all the new OCP's outstanding work completed, in addition to the entire bylaw's 1st draft prior to August 2009.



Policy

2009 Official Community Plan Update

In January 2009, the Planning Department outlined to Council, the new legislative requirements under the Local Government Act that require all municipalities in British Columbia to include Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets and Actions in their Official Community Plan by May 31, 2010. This work was completed in the Spring of 2009 and is included as Appendix 1 of the OCP. This work outlines the commitments made by Squamish Council from 2006 through to 2008. This work also entails policies which will provide guidance to reduce emissions. It also sets specific targets and actions that the District will undertake regarding buildings, transportation, air quality, waste management and energy supply.

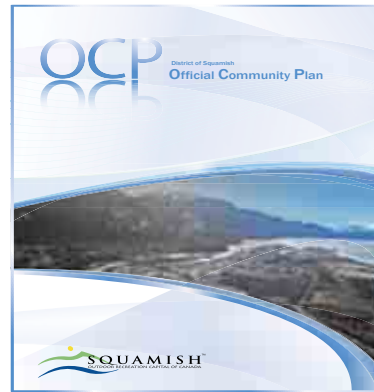
From January 2009 through to June of 2009, the OCP plan was reviewed and updated to include new direction from Council, new policy content, legislative requirements and organizational changes. These updates work to create a document that was easy to understand and was as user-friendly as possible.

The Summer of 2009 was a summer which marked several workshops, in which Council reviewed and discussed the proposed policies and mapping changes. On July 21st of 2009, the District of Squamish then culminated the First Reading of Official Community Plan Bylaw 2100, 2009.



Next Steps...

In January of 2010, Council was provided with a summary of all changes and additions to the Official Community Plan. The Planning Department has been directed to proceed with these formal updates, and in turn, will submit a revised Plan to include updates to the mapping schedules for Second Reading in the Spring of 2010.



Community Consultation

As part of the First Reading report to Council, the Planning Department outlined that additional consultation events would be held, in order to provide an opportunity for the community to comment on the contents of the Plan.

Following discussion with Council on what components they wanted to have incorporated into the consultation program, two open house events were held on October 14 and 15 of 2009 at the Sea to Sky Hotel. A questionnaire was also available online for those residents who were not able to attend either of these two open house sessions.

Approximately 75 residents attended over the two nights providing valuable comments and suggestions on several policy chapters of the Plan.

A workshop was also held with senior management from other District departments, to help ensure that the policies contained within the draft OCP, would assist each department to achieve their annual responsibilities and programs.

Early in 2010, Council will also be reviewing the OCP in conjunction with the District's Financial Plan and with the Squamish Lillooet Regional District Solid Waste Management Plan. They will also look to see if it is in conformance with the legislative requirements set out in the Local Government Act. Following this review, the Official Community Plan will be referred to the Agricultural Land Commission, Squamish Nation, Howe Sound School District 48, and other Provincial ministries for their respective comments.



Policy

Oceanfront Planning Process

Overview

In 2007 Council directed the Planning Department to undertake a District-led, community based planning process for the Oceanfront Peninsula (Nexen site and adjacent lands). Following the maxim that the “city must plan the city”, the process is designed to develop an Official Community Plan, Sub-Area Plan amendment that will establish vision and policy for the future of the Oceanfront site. Significant milestones were achieved in 2009 including Council endorsement of the “Policy Statement”, which will serve as the planning framework and principles for the preparation of the final plan.

The Oceanfront study area encompasses all lands on the Oceanfront Peninsula, south of Westminster Street, bounded by the Mamquam Blind Channel on the east, and Cattermole Slough to the west. The 80 acres of land and 80 acres of water within the study area are owned by the District of Squamish (managed by the Squamish Oceanfront Development Corporation), Mamquam Oceanfront Developments and BC Rail Properties. These owners, and their consulting representatives, have come together to form the Peninsula Landowners Collaborative (PLC) which is a group that funds and resources the community based planning process.

This current planning process is building on a number of community consultations through the years, including the Waterfront Concept Plan charette process, Smart Growth on the Ground, the Downtown Neighbourhood Plan process, the OCP review, and the Growth Management Strategy. Through this strong body of consultation, the process is looking to integrate a mix of land uses to promote economic development and employment, vibrant parks and public spaces, and an appropriate amount of housing, all within a leading-edge sustainability framework.

Community Consultation

To date a significant amount of consultation has been undertaken on the project and a support for the plan continued to grow in 2009.

In 2009 the community was engaged in discussing more detailed aspects of the plan, including a March 26 Open House where detailed concept plans were presented to the Community. The Community was then invited to complete a work-book that asked them to comment on, and compare, a number of attributes of the plans presented. Planning Staff and the planning team then took the information derived from the consultation to finalize the policy statement and continue with detailed design.

In July 2009, the Oceanfront Planning process achieved a significant milestone with Council’s endorsement of the Policy Statement. This document serves as the general planning framework and policy set to guide the preparation of the final plan.

A packed house of over 250 residents and stakeholders attended the presentation of some very detailed design and land-use options in October 2009. The Squamish Oceanfront Development Corporation and Mamquam Ocean Channel Developments Ltd. presented their work to date, highlighted by the public release of the SODC video describing the vision and approach to the District owned lands. The video can be viewed at www.squamishoceanfront.com.

Current Status and Next Steps

Currently the District is preparing the Draft Sub-Area Plan for inclusion in the Official Community Plan. This plan will introduce detailed land use policy, design guidelines, and maps that will guide the future of the oceanfront development and inform all future rezoning applications. Staff anticipate this plan will be presented to Council in a draft form in the Spring of 2010.

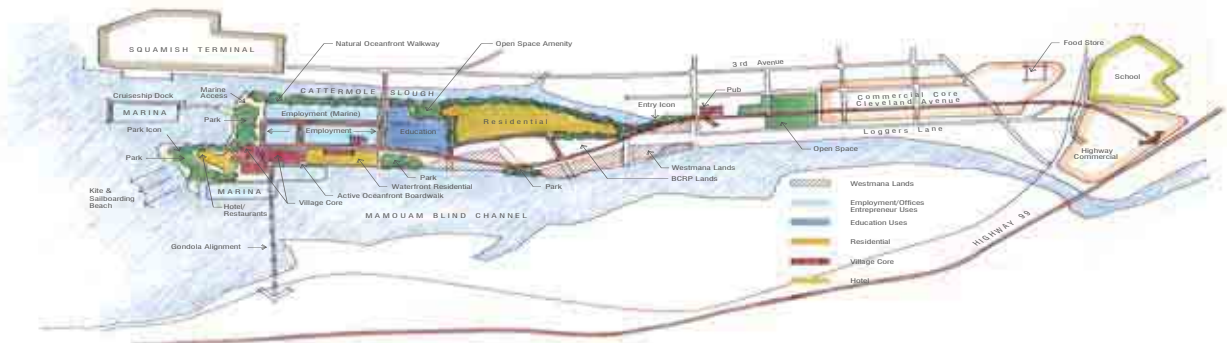


Policy

Future Trail Systems

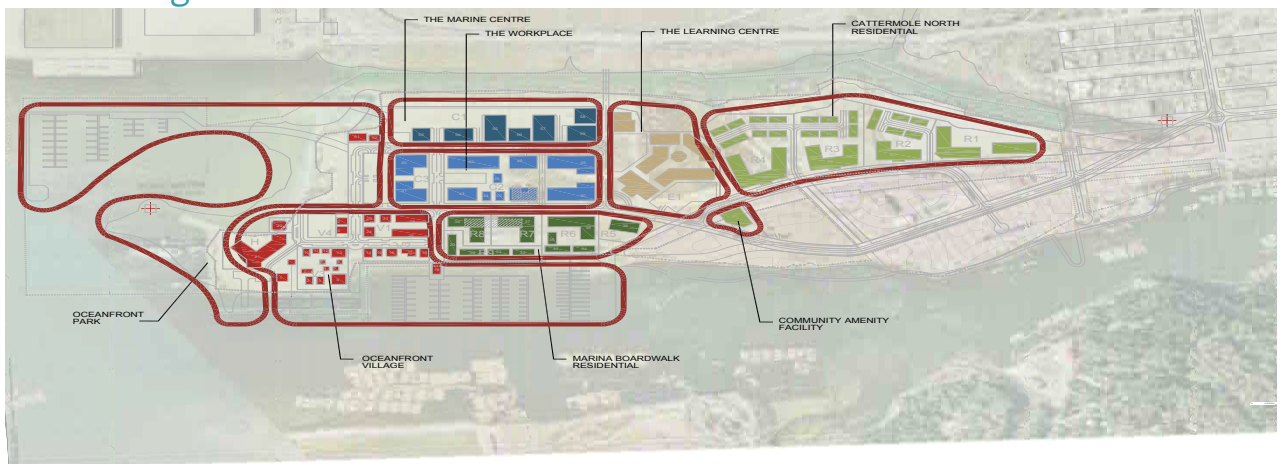


Future Land Use Plan



LAND USE PLAN
 SODC OCEANFRONT LANDS
 SQUAMISH, B.C.
 Aug 28, 2009

Future Neighbourhood Plan



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
 SODC OCEANFRONT LANDS
 SQUAMISH, B.C.
 Aug 28, 2009



Policy

Trails Master Plan

Overview

The District of Squamish Planning Department is, in close collaboration with the Parks Department and community stakeholders, developing Squamish's first Trails Master Plan. The purpose of the Trails Master



Plan is to outline a comprehensive strategy for providing a community wide trail network which links neighbourhoods, parks, schools, commercial areas, and open spaces as well as promoting connections to adjacent communities as envisioned in the District's Official Community Plan Parks and Recreation chapter.

The plan is intended to provide comprehensive guidance for achieving this goal by identifying existing and desired policy direction, trail routes, trail construction standards, trail signage guidelines and an implementation plan. The adoption of the plan and commitment to its refinement and implementation, is a significant opportunity to improve the quality of life for Squamish residents, and to broaden and strengthen the economic base in the District and the Sea to Sky Corridor.





Policy

Trails Master Plan



The planning principles for the trail system. These principles include:

- » Accommodating the full spectrum of users on trails appropriate for those users while minimizing conflicts;
- » Optimizing existing trails and developing links to provide a continuous network;
- » Developing a unified network through signage, mapping and marketing;
- » Establishing a trail classification system;
- » Working to secure land tenure for all trails in the Trail Master Plan;
- » Developing trails to a reasonable standard for the intended uses;
- » Recognizing trail uses (including walking, hiking, cycling, inline skating, horseback riding and motorized use (trials, dirt bike and ATV in limited areas);
- » Matching trail standards to intended users;
- » Using trails for transportation, recreation and tourism as needed;
- » Offering some trails with barrier free access; and
- » Seeking to establish partnerships wherever possible

Currently the District is preparing the Trails Master Plan. The plan will introduce specific trail initiatives to be undertaken (both one time and/or annually) by the District of Squamish. Items such as general trails policy, trail construction standards, signage and trail maintenance standards, public/private land use agreements, conflict resolution process, and trail mapping will help guide the future of trails in Squamish. Staff anticipate that the plan will be presented to Council in the Summer of 2010.



Policy

Zoning Bylaw Review

Overview

Council has identified a comprehensive review of the Zoning Bylaw No. 1345, 1995 to be undertaken as one of the priority projects for the 2009-2010.

In October 2009, Council endorsed the project scope and approach for the Review, organized into the following four phases:

- » Phase One is focused on identifying issues and challenges with the current Bylaw;
- » Phase Two consists of the main technical review, focusing on the identified issues as well as current parking standards, mapping issues, and organizational changes;
- » Phase Three focuses on the preparation of the draft Bylaw for review by Council; and
- » Phase Four is the formal Bylaw Approval process.



The Review is also utilizing the services of two consulting firms, one to focus on the consultation activities associated, and a second to undertake the technical review and updates. While they will work somewhat independently of each other, the overall program will be coordinated by the Planning Department.

It is anticipated that a draft Zoning Bylaw will be completed for Council's review toward the end of 2010.

Current Status

In December 2009, Requests for Proposals for the Consultation Services and Technical Services contracts were prepared. Five planning firms with expertise in community consultation were awarded a chance to submit a proposal for the Consultation Services RFP. Additionally, an open call for proposals for the Technical Service portion was advertised on the BC Civic Info web site.

Three proposals were received for the Consultation Services contract. These proposals went through a standardized review process which is outlined in the District's Purchasing Policy. The choice proposal was awarded by Council in January 2010.

Seven proposals were received for the Technical Services contract. The Planning Department undertook a comprehensive review of each, as outlined by the Purchasing Policy. Council awarded the contract in February 2010.

Next Steps

The Planning Department will coordinate an initial meeting with both consulting teams to clarify roles and responsibilities of each team, and the overall management of the Review. Details of Phase One – "Issue Identification", will also be discussed at that time. This will include a proposed schedule for the initial workshops with Council, staff, and other representatives from the development industry.



Policy

Upper Mamquam Blind Channel Study

Overview

A land use study for the Upper Mamquam Blind Channel was first initiated by Council in April 2007 in response to community concerns about development in the surrounding area. Following a consultative process in May 2008 that was unsuccessful in achieving any agreement between the landowners in the area, Council reconsidered the priority for the study and decided that it would not proceed until after the Public Hearing for the Official Community Plan.

In November 2009, an updated process for the land use study was presented to Council in relation to recent discussions and decisions on Official Community Plan policies. Key to that process was the need to re-establish a positive relationship with the landowners and stakeholder groups with interest in the area.

The proposed scope of the study includes the following components:

- » Downtown Neighbourhood Plan – guiding planning principles;
- » Existing facilities and features in the surrounding area (Adventure Centre, Smoke Bluffs Park, Rose Park);
- » Pedestrian and vehicular connections to the area to Downtown and Valleycliffe;
- » Trail network connections – recreational and commuter; and
- » Access and use of the Blind Channel and marine-based recreation and economic opportunities.

Current Status

Through the Official Community Plan Review, Council has decided that the Upper Mamquam Blind Channel area will be designated as Downtown. This land use incorporates a range of residential, commercial, institutional and parks and recreational activities.

In November 2009, Council directed that a Terms of Reference for the Study be prepared for further discussion. Following on the decision to change the land use designation to Downtown, indicated on the Study Area map, the Terms of Reference will need to reflect the range of land uses possible and instead, focus significant attention on linkages and connections to and from the area.

Community Consultation

Consultation will be an important component of the land use study to re-establish the community's confidence in the planning process. To help accomplish this goal, much of the focus of the Study will be on consultation activities. Staff will work with a consultant to finalize a consultation program and variety of methods for residents to participate in the land use study.



Upper Mamquam Blind Channel Land Study Area



Policy

District Energy - Neighbourhood Energy Utility Feasibility

As projects like Waterfront Landing near final approvals, and the Oceanfront Development Lands start to roll out draft master Concept Plans, the vision for 'how will everything work' becomes more and more tangible.

In June of 2009, the District of Squamish undertook a detailed Feasibility Study of whether a Neighbourhood Energy Utility (NEU) would be environmentally, economically, and socially viable in downtown Squamish. The feasibility study screened potential energy sources based on geography, and in October, with the input of study sponsors including the District of Squamish Council, Lonsdale Energy Corporation, and BC Hydro, narrowed potential heat sources down to Ocean Heat, and Biomass.

A detailed Business Analysis is now underway, and will be available to the public by March 2010.

The Business Analysis consists of:

- Financial projections based on a pro-forma;
- A summary of Study outputs for different supply and demand scenarios
- Project financing, Structure and Partnership potential
- Legal and Regulatory issues
- A Risk Management Plan
- A Work Plan
- An Assessment of Sustainability Benefits

For more information, please contact Sabina FooFat in the Planning Department.



Climate Action Charter

In December of 2008, District of Squamish Council signed the Climate Action Charter. As one of 175 BC municipalities that has signed the CAC, District of Squamish now receives 100% of all Carbon Tax costs rebated to the municipality.

As a signatory to the CAC, Squamish also has GHG reducing responsibilities including committing to becoming carbon-neutral by 2012; and publicly reporting on their plan and progress in meeting carbon neutrality every year.

The first annual Climate Action Charter draft report was submitted for Council consideration in November 2009. Details of the report include District's plans and actions to meet carbon neutrality by 2012 including:

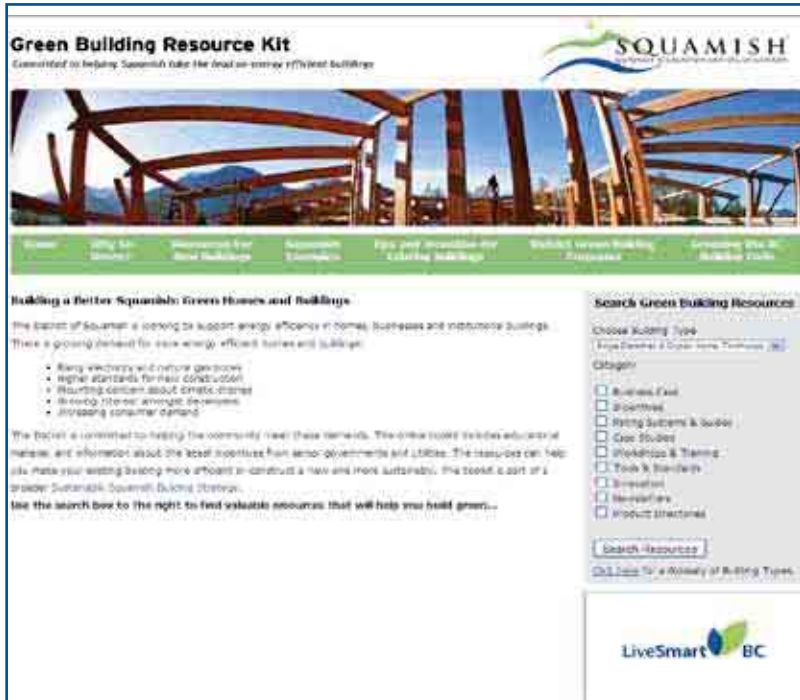
- An Energy Audit report of Municipal Buildings, including retrofit recommendations that guarantee cost savings within 8 years (and average 4 years);
- Inclusion of Greenhouse Gas reduction targets in the Draft Official Community Plan, as per Bill 27-2008;
 - Continued investment in the "Green Fleet" program, including replacement of a standard vehicle with a hybrid Ford Escape, and purchase of a new battery powered Ice Resurfacing machine (aka: Zamboni) called the Olympia Ice Bear
 - Initiation of the District Energy Neighbourhood Energy Utility Feasibility Study

A copy of the report to Council is available from the Planning Department.



Policy

Squamish Green Building Toolkit - Now Live!



Another phase of the Squamish Community Energy Action Plan (CEAP) is up and running. The Summer of 2009 saw the launch of the Green Building Resource Kit. This web site highlights the District of Squamish commitment to support Greenhouse Gas emission reductions across all sectors of the Community. This kit is designed to be a resource for construction ranging from single-detached, to industrial construction - the tool kit includes Tips and Incentives, web-links to established resource pages, and rationale for how green building is good for the planet, and can save money at the same time.

New Development Brochures and Application Forms

Since 2003, an unprecedented development surge in Squamish highlighted changes in both the type and scale of development that was feasible in Squamish, as well as the changing nature of development practices provincially. The new Development Application Brochures and Forms that were developed through the spring and summer of 2009, incorporate more detailed and up-front information about how Squamish reviews and approves development. They include tools and 'check-list' items on everything from new Council directed policy, such as the Wildlife Attractant Bylaw, to advanced notice of Flood Construction Level requirements. The new brochures and forms also direct potential applicants to the web site to view the Green Buildings web-page (part of the Community Energy Action Plan) and Bear Aware. The forms and brochures are now available electronically on the Squamish web site on the Planning page. As before, the brochures and forms will provide development application information on: Official Community Plan Amendments, Rezoning Amendments, Development Variance Permits, Subdivisions and Development Permits.





Development Showcase

The Riverstones

80 new purpose-built affordable rental units in Squamish for seniors, single-parent families, and for residents with disabilities....

The Riverstones is British Columbia's first housing project to be funded by the federal government's Economic Action Plan. Other partners include BC Housing, the District of Squamish and private Developer Michael Hutchison. The \$14 million project cost includes \$4.35 million from the federal and provincial governments, while the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation is contributing \$7.8 million by way of insured mortgage and interim financing. The District of Squamish is one of the first municipalities in BC to apply new legislation introduced in Bill 27-2008 to amended the Development Cost Charge Bylaw, and waive development cost charges for the affordable rental housing project. Bethel Lands Corporation also contributed \$1.4 million by reducing the overall project costs. Sea-to-Sky Social services is the partner that is undertaking the overall residential management of the development.

The project is estimated to create employment for 100 people over two years, and invest upwards of \$ 12 million in labour and materials costs in the local economy, helping to sustain a viable construction industry in the area.





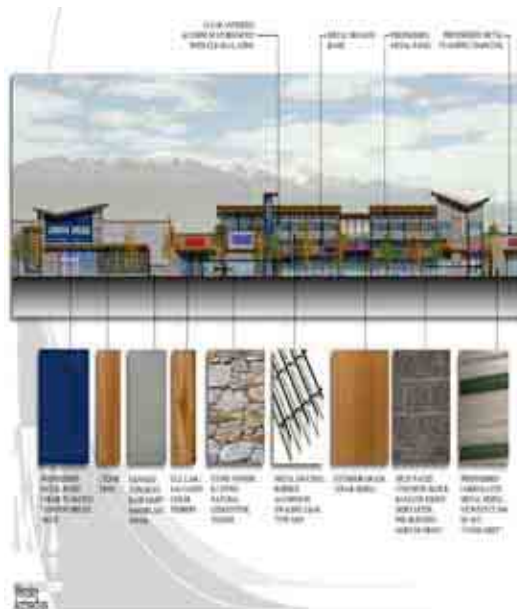
Development Showcase

Garibaldi Village Phase II

80,377 square feet of new Commercial, Retail and office space added to the Garibaldi Highlands area.....



2009 marked a Commercial landmark year with the introduction of the Garibaldi Village Phase II development ,which opened its doors for business in November 2009. This architecturally pleasing development has already helped to promote a sense of community identity and character to the area, while creating an attractive and cohesive impression of Squamish.





Development Showcase

Waterfront Landing

A new Residential neighbourhood for Downtown Squamish, that entails urban waterfront attractiveness and focuses on Green and sustainable development...



The new Waterfront Landing neighbourhood (formally known as the Interfor Mill site) is now in the process of being converted to a sustainable and compact neighbourhood with adoption of a rezoning application in July of 2009. This Brownfield site focuses on principles such as “Smart Growth on the Ground” while simultaneously instilling green and sustainable initiatives at its forefront. Additionally there will be many on-site amenities such as a public waterfront walk, trail system, and public harbour to name a few. This new multi-family residential downtown expansion will add up to 1,500 units of added home space, and will therefore be able to sustain approximately 3,500 residents. Other attractions to area will be a potential water transport service, public waterfront park, public area restaurant, boat launch, harbour, two marinas, and public lagoon that will be available for recreational use by all Squamish Residents.



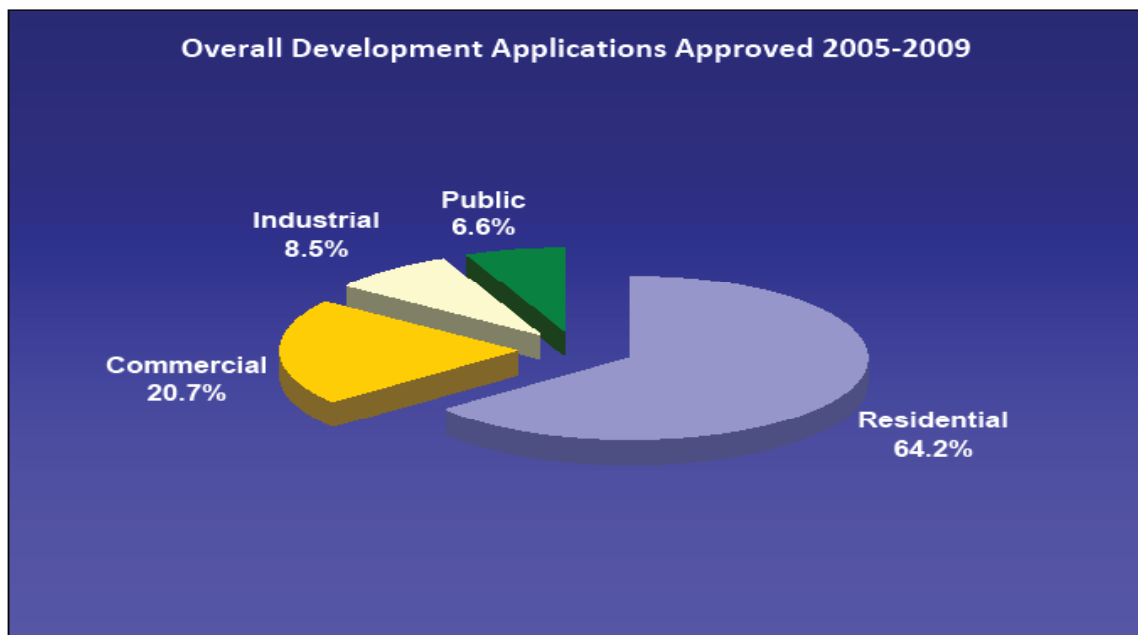


Current Development Activity

Trend Analysis of Development Applications from 2005-2009

Historically from 2005-2007, Squamish was faced with many Development and growth opportunities. This phenomenon coupled with a seemingly endless positive economic forecast, boosted the District's rate of development immensely. This section of the report outlines the development trends from 2005-2009 and focuses mainly on the highlights from the last year.

The following information includes data from only those development applications that have received the final development approvals, or are under application for final approvals that will enable construction in the short-term. Accordingly, development permit, subdivision and building permit approvals are included. With the exclusion of references to the development applications under consideration, applications for rezoning are not typically included unless accompanied by a final approval, such as a development permit.

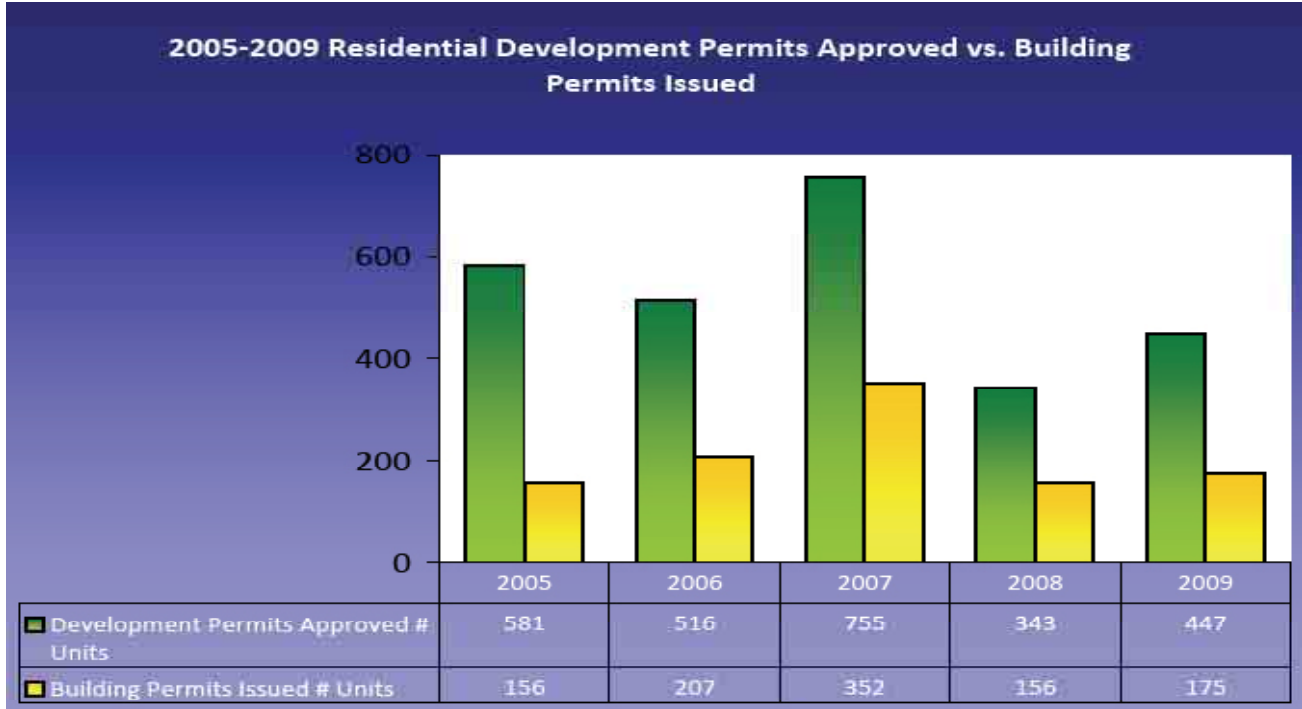


As the chart suggests, overall development for the period of 2005-2009 in Squamish has been predominantly focused in the Residential sector. Due to the recent economic slow down the overall average of commercial development fell 2.3%, Industrial Development fell 1.5% and Residential Development fell 0.8% for the period between 2005-2009. Contrastingly, public developments rose 4.6% in 2009, mainly due to the West Coast Railway expansion Project which introduced 22,069 sq./ft. of added Museum space into Squamish.



Current Development Activity

Residential Growth Statistics



As the above data illustration portrays, development Permits approved in 2005 - 2009 have historically been higher than the number of building permits issued reflecting multi-phase approvals or projects that made it through approvals but did not proceed.

Throughout the last five years on average, less the half of all Residential Development Permits approved, move through the process to have building permits issued. The reason for this is that a number of Development Permits contemplate developments that are phased over time. It also reflects the temporal element of the development process, in that it is typically a number of years between Council approval of a Development Permit, and the occupancy of a residential building.





Current Development Activity

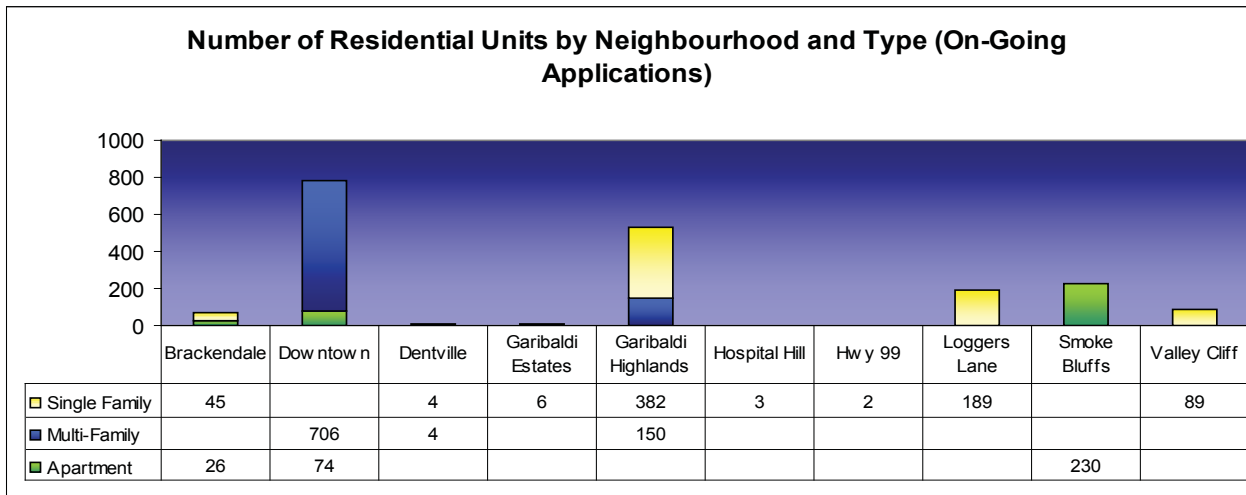
Residential Growth Statistics

The preceding+ graph can also be translated into an estimate of population growth fueled by new construction. Assuming an occupancy rate of 100% an average of 2.5 persons per dwelling, and a base population of 14,981 the rate of growth accommodated by new development based on a building permit data is as follows:

Estimated Growth Rate Sustained by New Construction

- 2005- 2.6%
- 2006- 3.3%
- 2007- 5.5%
- 2008- 2.3%
- 2009 -2.9%

These growth rates are generally consistent with those forecast in the District of Squamish Growth Management Study. The Management study forecasts a growth rate of 3.9% from 2003-2011; 2007 registering slightly higher than projected; and 2008 and 2009 registering slightly lower.



The Planning Department is currently processing applications for an additional 1770 residential units, 44% of which are located in the downtown area as illustrated in the data table above.

In 2003 Council established policy to attract additional residential density in the downtown to add vitality and



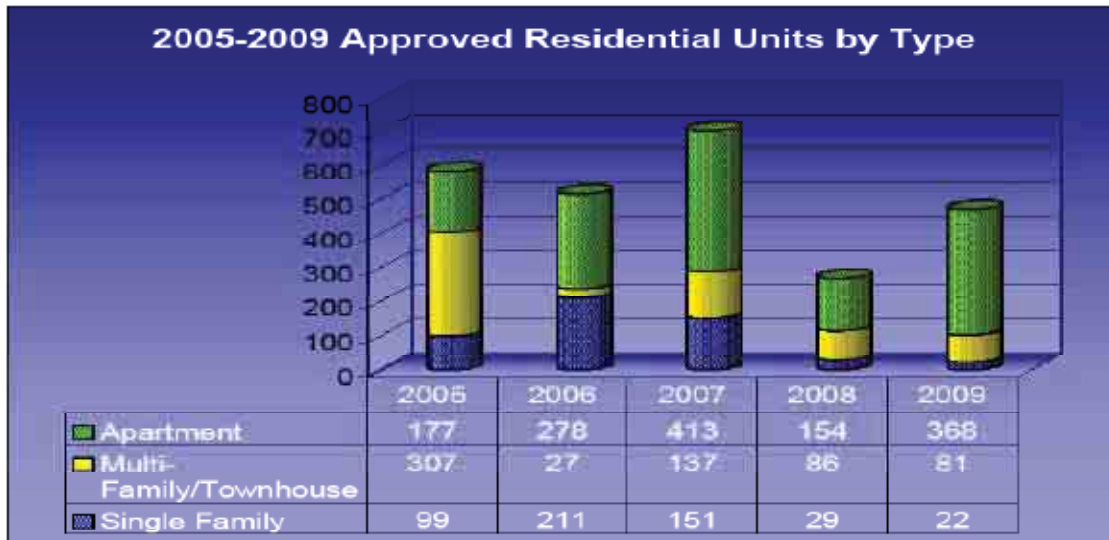
support the commercial businesses in the downtown core. As evident in the above chart, the downtown has become the primary area for planned residential growth, indicating the success of the planning policy work undertaken over the years to promote downtown growth.

Other areas of significant potential growth are the Garibaldi Highlands, Logger's Lane and the Smoke Bluff lands. These residential applications could see the fruition of 512 new homes in the Highlands, 169 new Single Family homes in the Logger's Lane area, and 230 new apartments in the Smoke Bluff areas.

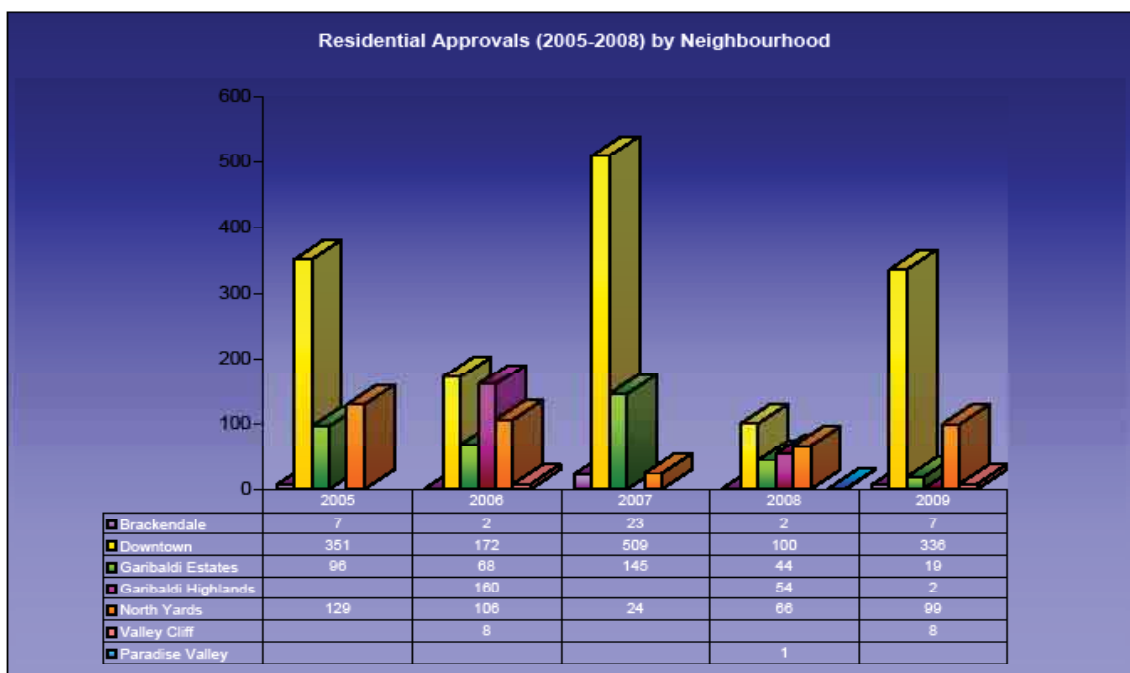


Current Development Activity

Residential Growth Statistics



Despite the economic downturn of 2008, 2009 showed an increase in the number of apartment and multi-family units approved. The largest increase was focused in the downtown area with an additional 336 Residential units approved. The main project contributors include “The Mireau” which will contribute an additional 52 apartment units, “Summit View V” which will contribute 130 apartment units and 14 multifamily dwellings, and finally, “The Falls” which will add an additional 90 apartment dwellings to the downtown area. The second largest neighbourhood to see a development increase is the North Yards with an added 99 residential units approved.

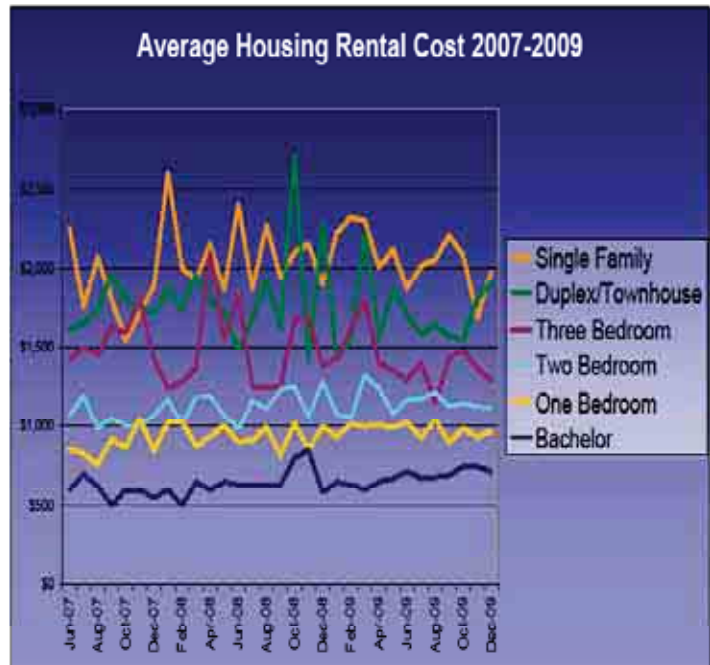




Current Development Activity

Residential Growth Statistics

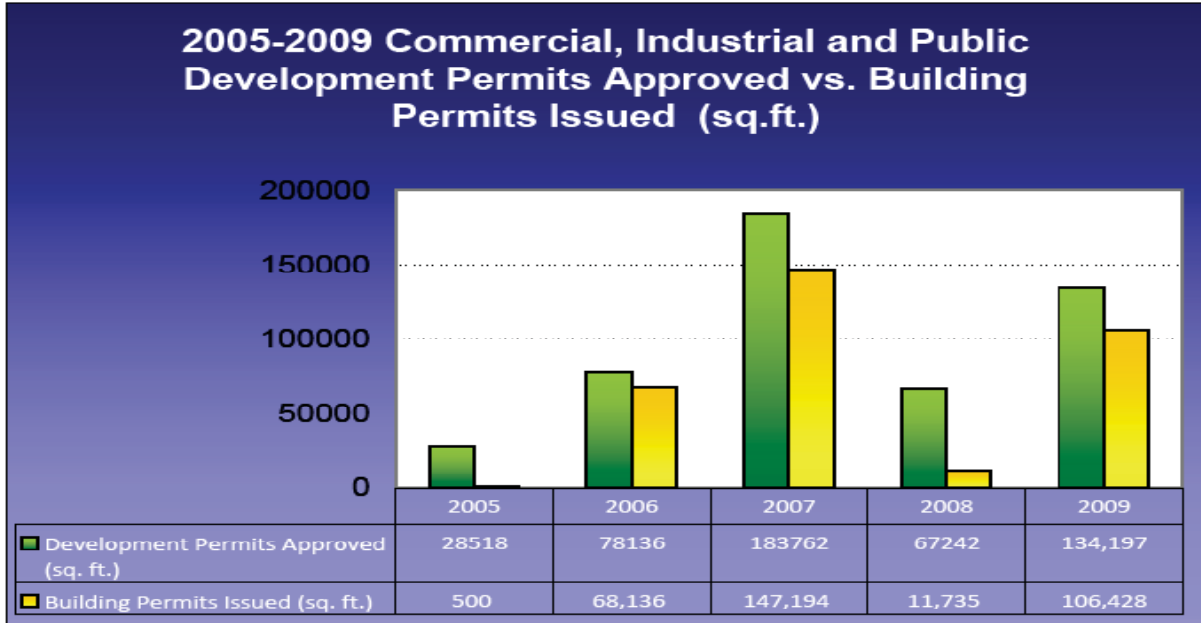
The average dwelling rental cost in Squamish has fluctuated immensely over the last five years. June of 2007 saw a high demand of rentals due to many key projects in the corridor, namely the Sea to Sky Highway improvement Project. This particular project fueled a major surge in the local rental market, leaving vacancy rates the lowest they've seen in recorded history. This trend continued for many months until the project's completion in 2009. The highway workers exodus, in addition to the global economic slow down, then resulted in flip phenomenon leaving, dropping the average rental demand in a very large way. In turn this negatively affected the average rental prices. Since this drop, and the recovery from the economic slow down) prices are recovering to find balance between a healthy number of residential vacancies and occupancies.





Current Development Activity

Commercial Industrial and Public Statistics



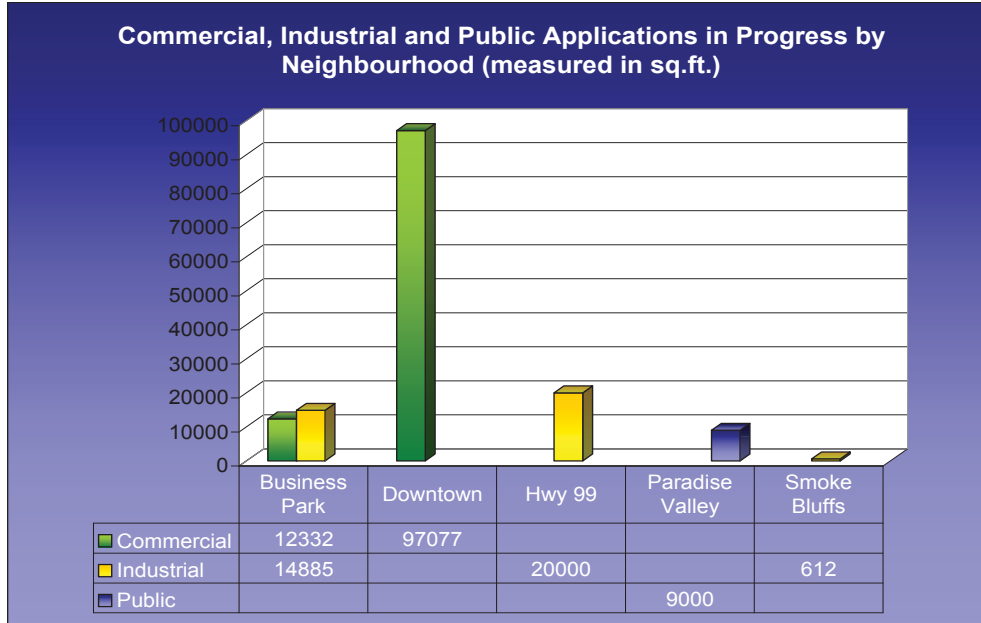
The number of Development Permits approved, historically has always been higher than the building permits approved due to the number of developments that are phased in over time. In 2009, large developments such as the Garibaldi Village Phase two, obtained building permits which added 82,657 sq. ft. of Commercial space into Squamish. Other significant Commercial developments which obtained building permits were the Squamish Toyota located on Government Rd. This new development increased the building permit square footage an additional 16,275 sq. ft. in 2009. However, even though building permit square footage was almost its highest since 2007, development Permit Square footage still outweighed the building permits by 21%. This trend reflects the consistency between development permits issued versus building permits issued between 2005 and 2009.





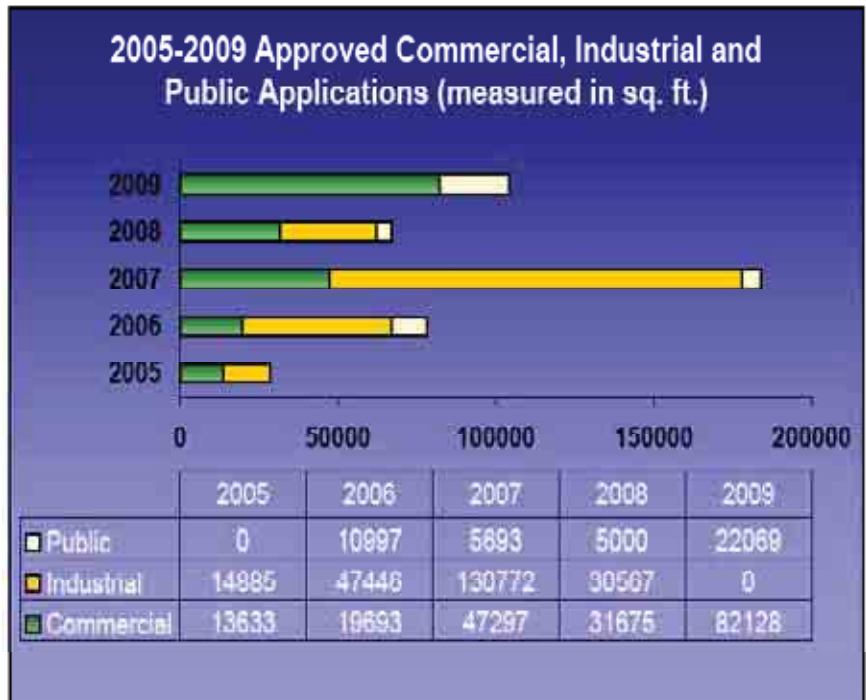
Current Development Activity

Commercial Industrial and Public Statistics



The Planning Department is currently processing applications for 153,906 sq. ft. of Public, Industrial and Commercial spaces. As indicated, the largest of these applications is an application for 85,572 sq. ft. of commercial space in the downtown. Other significant applications include: the Shannon Springs Resort which could add 20,000 new sq. ft. of Commercial, Resort/Hotel space to the Hwy. 99 area.

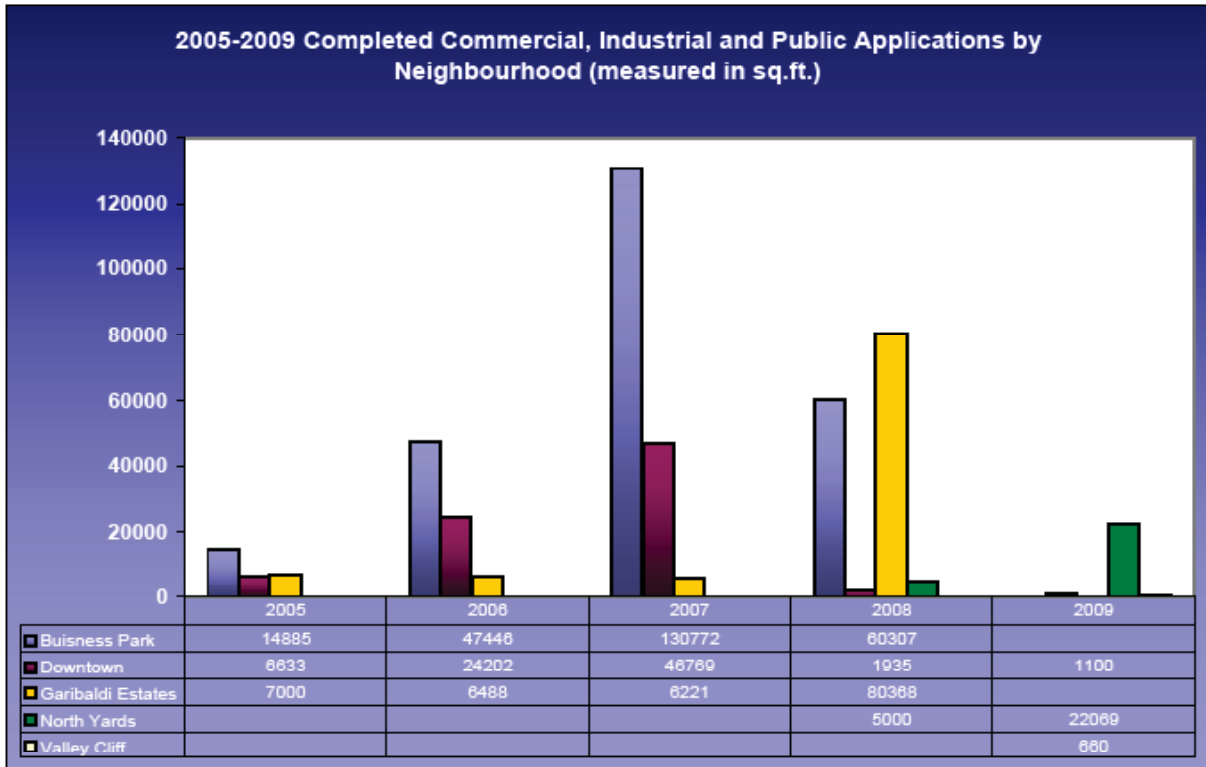
The graph to the below identifies the number of approved Commercial, Industrial and Public Applications from 2005-2009. In the past year more Commercial Applications have been approved than any other year to date. Additionally, Public applications set a record this past year with an additional 22,069 square feet of public square footage added to Squamish's portfolio. The sole project contributor was the West Coast Railway expansion project which added a Public Round House and Conference Centre. This addition to the railway park doubled public applications approved in 2006; which, previous to this past year, saw the highest number of public square footage in the 2005-2008 period.





Current Development Activity

Commercial Industrial and Public Statistics



In 2009 the North Yards saw the largest increase in Development Square footage, with the West Coast Railway Conference Centre adding an additional 22,069 square feet. Future projects such as the Oceanfront Lands approved a bylaw this past year which will add an additional 30,000 square feet of commercial space to the downtown core. Over the coming years we will expect to see a greater increase statistically in downtown growth, namely due to projects such as Waterfront Landing and the Oceanfront Development Lands. These projects in turn, will promote a greater sense of Community for the downtown and provide amenities for all of Squamish and its visitors to enjoy.



Looking Ahead to 2010 and Beyond

The following is the Department's strategic objectives for 2010-2013. They express the role of planning in the District, as well as the initiatives that the department will be undertaking in 2010 and beyond.

The Planning Departments Strategic Mandate

- Provide for the long-term sustainability of the community by balancing current opportunities for growth and densification, with elements that contribute to the overall liveability of the community.
- Express the community's future goals and aspirations through sound, collaborative policy development.
- Provide increased opportunities for effective and meaningful participation in the community planning process.
- Incorporate emerging trends and technologies into the long-term vision for the community to in turn, keep Squamish at the leading edge of planning and development practice.
- Implement and manage a development approvals process that ensures maximum quality of life, benefit, and amenity to the community while providing predictability and certainty to the development and investment community.
- Resource and inform broader corporate initiatives related to governance, sustainability, growth, economic development, and corporate operations.

Departmental Strategic Objectives and Actions

The following is a list of the Department's key strategic objectives for 2010 to achieve the Strategic Mandate. Following each objective is a number of actions the department will undertake in 2010 and beyond, to achieve the strategic objectives. The objectives are:

1. Complete On-Going Policy Projects
2. Initiate New Policy Projects
3. Lead an Efficient, Well Coordinated, and Responsible Development Process
4. Promote and Facilitate Effective Community Engagement
5. Manage External Influences and Projects

1. Complete On-Going Policy Projects

In 2010, the Planning Department will complete a number of on-going policy projects. Many of these projects have been underway for several years and are very near to completion. Strong Council support for these policy initiatives will ensure they remain the Department's top priority through the approvals process.

Actions: Complete the following Plans:

- Official Community Plan
- Oceanfront Sub-Area Plan
- Trails Master Plan
- Downtown Neighbourhood Plan, and Initial Zoning Amendments
- Community Energy Action Plan (complete remaining components)
- Neighbourhood Energy Utility Feasibility Study
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Amenities Policy
- Upper Mamquam Blind Channel Land Use Planning Study



Looking Ahead to 2010 and Beyond...

2. Initiate New Policy Projects

In addition to completing a number of policy projects, the Planning Department also anticipates initiating new policy development in 2010-2013. These policies are intended to implement the overall planning framework introduced through recently completed policy projects.

Actions: Complete the following Plans:

- Zoning Bylaw Update
- Climate Action Charter Implementation Plan
- Downtown Urban Design Guidelines
- Municipal Buildings Energy Program
- Landscape Policy
- Green Building Guidelines

3. Lead an Efficient, Well Coordinated , and Responsible Development Process

The Planning Department evaluates the development process on an ongoing basis. In 2010 a number of specific improvements will be introduced to make the process more efficient, comprehensive, and accountable. The result will be a coordinated development process that yields the best possible outcomes for the community and the development industry. Beyond 2010, continued attention to efficiency and quality will continue

Actions:

- Implement a team-based approach to development application review, to improve internal and external communications
- Implement a new referrals and file management approach, to ensure complete and concise communication
- Implement application management and prioritization systems
- Develop templates for commonly used legal agreements and covenants
- Review the role and function of the Technical Planning Committee to improve efficacy
- Improve quality of development projects with respect to smart growth and sustainability through attention to green building and development innovations
- Respect, uphold, and implement recent policy works through the development approval process (e.g. SGOG, GMS, OCP, AH)
- Consider delegation bylaw for minor and natural environment development permits
- Consider innovative means of tracking and benchmarking the development approvals process
- Introduce comprehensive file-management software tools



Looking Ahead to 2010 and Beyond...

4. Promote and Facilitate Effective Community Engagement and Customer Service

Effective community engagement is integral to the success of the work of the Planning Department. In previous years, the District has paid particular attention to creatively and meaningfully engaging the community in planning and decision making. In the 2010-2013 period, the Department will continue to develop on these successes and continually find new ways of communicating with the public

Actions:

- ◆ Produce a Department Annual Report with outline of ongoing works and statistical description of development activity level
- ◆ Web site enhancement with more accessible content, forms, and interactive communication tools, including mapping, development information, and applicable plans and bylaws
- ◆ Proactive and innovative communication with the public through policy work by utilizing a variety of engagement techniques and practices.
- ◆ Evaluate the Public Information Meeting role and function, and refine to ensure maximum community engagement in development applications
- ◆ Track and Benchmark customer contacts to track volumes, responses, and customer engagements
- ◆ Communicate regularly and concisely with Council and the Community



5. Manage External Influences and Projects

The Planning Department manages a number of issues and processes that are beyond the direct control of the District. Whether planning processes undertaken by other levels of government, or influences such as the global and local economic climate; there are a number of external influences that affect the work of the Planning Department. Strategically, it is important that the Department acknowledge, plan for, and manage these processes and influences.

Actions:

- ◆ Monitor and participate in the Provincial review of Garibaldi at Squamish
- ◆ Represent the District's interests through the completion of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District's Regional Growth Strategy
- ◆ Represent the District's interests in the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District's Governance and Boundaries Review
- ◆ Implement and work with the Squamish Nation Protocol Agreement
- ◆ Prepare for changes in development activity that may result from global and local economic changes
- ◆ Respond effectively and efficiently to Legislative amendments

To learn more about this report or to contact the Planning Department on any planning related issues, please use the contact information below:

General Enquiries:

604.815.5002

planning@squamish.ca

www.squamish.ca

Hours:

Monday to Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.