

A2 - Resort Municipalities, Amenity Migration & Smarter Growth

Presentation Title: The Changing Face of Mountain Resort Communities in Western Canada – An Examination of Ecological, Social, and Economic Models from the 19th to 21st Centuries

Presenters:

William Brown - Resort Municipality of Whistler

Speaker Abstract

We cannot plan for the future of mountain resort communities without understanding how economic, social, and ecological forces have affected their past. This paper examines how the ecological, economic, and social forces of the 19th century shaped mountain resort communities such as Banff and Jasper, how these same forces shaped Whistler in the 20th Century and how these forces may shape the new mountain resort communities of the 21st century. The paper will also examine how mountain resort communities have adapted to change in the past and what lessons we can learn from them as they prepare to adapt to change in the future. In addition, the paper will examine several recent proposed new 'mountain resort communities' and the validity of the ecological, social, and economic models that they are based on. The paper will conclude by asking if the current models of mountain resort development are compatible with emerging land use models based on regenerative principles.

Speaker Biography

William Brown is the Manager of Community Planning for the Resort Municipality of Whistler. Prior to arriving in Whistler in 2004 he was the Senior Planner for the Town of Banff. The Town of Banff is located in the Canadian Rockies UNESCO World Heritage Site. His tenure at the Town of Banff was preceded by a four year term as a planner in the Town of Canmore, a gateway community to Banff National Park. William Brown has a BSc. degree in biology and MA degree in Regional Planning and Resource Development.

Presentation # 2 title: Smart Growth for Communities in Transition: Is Resource to Resort the Best Option?

Presenters:

Erin Welk - Smart Growth BC
Jason Emmert - Smart Growth BC

Speaker Abstract

Many resource-based communities in British Columbia have experienced the failing of industries that form the backbone of their economy and they are quickly turning to resort development as a means of keeping themselves afloat. This raises the question: Are resort communities the best and most sustainable answer from economic, social, and environmental perspectives? This question is timely given the increasingly important role tourism and resort activities play in B.C.'s economy. Government policy and the international attention from the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games will focus the spotlight on B.C. communities. How can new and existing resort communities develop an important niche market in the tourism industry while also maintaining vibrant, unique and livable communities for residents and visitors alike? This presentation suggests guidelines and best practices for the development of a 'smart growth resort community.' Such resort communities are distinct and unique, with engaged residents developing resilient economies and protected natural ecosystems – products that are competitive in a global marketplace. To become such vibrant, livable places, these resort communities must overcome challenges common to resort communities – such as local economic development, maintaining character, tourism, amenity migration, heritage preservation and affordable housing. We address these challenges with a series of strategies and examples from across North America. Each place has a distinct history and unique stories, and it is important for a resort community to celebrate its resource history. Transitioning from an economy based on agriculture and wood

products, the Town of Oliver has developed a diverse and resilient economy. The 'Wine Capital of Canada' offers a variety of tourism products to support its brand. Importantly, the economic development has mobilized the talents and ideas of the existing residents while also attracting creative professionals who have invested in the community's tourism infrastructure and products. What about those resort communities with a lively downtown core and walkable, connected neighbourhoods and resort areas? We demonstrate that land use patterns and connectivity are essential to a resort community's success in attracting visitors and sustaining a diverse residential population. Take for example the artistic and resort nodes that have developed in the Resort Municipality of Tofino. In the late 1990s the town's land use plan designated coastal areas specifically for resort activity, and earmarked an underutilized parking lot for neighbourhood commercial activity. Today, four resorts occupy that 'Coastal tourism area', and their visitors contribute to a lively cluster of artisan shops, cafes and surf shops in the former parking lot. This example highlights the importance of enabling the connections between resort and commercial areas. With these and other strategies for new and existing resort communities, we offer a smart growth approach to sustainable and resilient resort and community development.

Speaker Biographies

Erin Welk, B.A., M.A. Geography Planner, Smart Growth Advisory Services Erin Welk is a community planner with a focus on resort planning and facilitation. Erin founded a consulting company that provides tourism planning and public consultation to small communities. Prior to joining the Smart Growth B.C. team Erin was a planner for a resort planning firm in Whistler B.C. where her projects focused on community planning issues specific to resort areas. Erin holds a MA in Geography from Simon Fraser University, and a BA Honors in Geography from the University of Calgary.

Jason Emmert, B.A., M.A. Planning Manager of Community Engagement and Policy Jason Emmert is a Community Development Planner with a diverse experience in the planning field encompassing a various aspects of the planning cycle including research, policy analysis and development, facilitation, community mobilization, and evaluation. His work has included collaboratively planning with fishermen in Brazil, researching and coauthoring a local economic development manual for municipalities, and analyzing socioeconomic factors of environmental projects in Kazakhstan.