

Questions for Candidates from the WTA & S2SPC

Melinda Lopez's Responses

1. There is an extensive public consultation process underway for the rezoning for the Northlands site. Despite public feedback indicating strong support for a recreational amenity as part of the community amenity contribution (CAC), the initial public presentation proposed the elimination of the racket club from the site without a commitment to replace it. Will you commit to preserving the WRC - an important recreational/social amenity that has served this community for 30 years - either in its current location or offsite?

It is the duty of an elected official to represent and serve the interests of the community. It is my understanding that the community strongly wishes to keep the WRC (most in its current form if possible). The WRC is an important community hub, recreation centre and childcare centre. I do not think that demolishing such a structure and then rebuilding it elsewhere is aligned with Whistler's sustainability goals (demolition and rebuilding is wasteful and very eco-unfriendly). I do commit to doing everything in my power to preserve the WRC according to the community's wishes. My personal belief is that it should be preserved in its current form, but I would like to see the data and feedback from the community to confirm that is also what the community wishes.

2. The WTA and the S2SPC envision a new racket centre constructed by the developer as part of the CAC contribution, on land contributed by the municipality, and run through a facility lease agreement with an experienced racket sports operator. Several sites owned by the municipality have been considered, including Spruce Grove and Meadow Park. What is your position on the contribution of municipally owned land for this project?

Again, I prefer to base my decisions on community engagement. I would definitely not be opposed to using municipal lands, but part of me feels that a better solution is sitting right under our noses (leave the WRC be, perhaps?) Why do people think that the current WRC and a second development on Northlands must be mutually exclusive? There must be a creative solution that allows for both to coexist peacefully.

3. If a suitable offsite location cannot be found or agreed upon for the existing Whistler Racket Club, do you agree that the facility should remain on the 4500 Northlands Blvd. site and the plans for the development must include a replacement for the existing recreational amenity?

Yes, I agree.

4. There are many competing interests in the allocation of the CAC expected through the Northlands rezoning, but the two most widely supported are affordable employee housing and the replacement of the existing racket club. Do you agree that affordable employee housing and a replacement for the racket facility are the top two priorities for the allocation of the CAC, or are there other community "needs" that should take precedence?

I agree that employee housing and preserving the WRC (or replacing it only if absolutely necessary) are the top two priorities for this site

5. While we believe that recreation is a priority in Whistler, if it is determined that other community needs should take precedence over recreation, then would you support a process to determine the most appropriate recreational assets that should remain in Whistler.

Yes, I think that there should be a process of community engagement before any recreational assets are placed at risk. I also think that these processes should be transparent. One thing I disliked about the Northlands questionnaire (besides being borderline preclusively tedious and long), is that the person responding to the survey doesn't know if their comments are falling into the void only to fall upon deaf ears. When I left my comments, I had suggested that WRC remain in its current state, and that the bed units be allocated for affordable housing for workers. Specifically, I thought the bed units would be best suited for the first responders like paramedics and firefighters, perhaps some ski patrol, and their families. The paramedics and firefighters get called at all hours of the night, and often they must go to the firehouse or ambulance station (both centrally located on either Lorimer or Village Gate) before attending to the accident. They really need to be housed close to the ambulance/fire stations. I am sure they and their families would not mind the noise of tennis balls, would appreciate having such an amazing community amenity next door, and would just be grateful to have secure housing. Those were my own thoughts, but what matters more is what the

community thinks. I would want to hear what everyone has to say, and see if we can find a solution that makes everyone happy.