

Questions for Candidates from the WTA & S2SPC

Jeff Murl'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?

As stated in the question, the WRC is an important recreational/social amenity, and it needs to be preserved in one form or another. Racquet sports are part of the recreational fabric of this community and what the facility has done recently to increase its social impact has been remarkable over the last few years. It should continue to offer four season recreation to community members and visitors alike.

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?

As part of the negotiation with the developer, the Muni will need to consider all options in order to maximize the community benefit for Whistler. So, Spruce Grove would certainly be a consideration as well as looking if Meadow Park could be upgraded to incorporate more forms of recreation and the social component that is often lacking in that facility.

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?

I think all options are still on the table, and if the CAC was maximized by keeping the facility within the current site then that would make sense. At this point in the negotiations we still need to evaluate the value of the CAC, and then calculate various proposals, put together budgets, and financials to see whether on site or off that brought the best result for the community.

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 believe the vision for a multi use recreation facility offering racket sports and social amenities is highly desirable to the community, and the community does not want to see the elimination of recreation facilities through this development. Housing is obviously a top priority for the community as well, and certainly this development will come with a lot of bed units, so I think that will be an easier ask from the developer. What remains of the CAC at that time should provide for other opportunities to meet other needs as well. I would hope the developer would take steps to ensure not all the needs have to be met through the CAC, and that healthcare and childcare would make the proposal more palatable to the community and not force the community to fund it all from the CAC.

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.

All options should always be considered when it comes to meeting the needs of the community. But recreation is a fundamental need of the community as it feeds our tourism, which feeds the economy and creates the need for housing, and all the services, etc. There will come a time when all our facilities are in peak form (probably never), but I look at the Tantalus as an example of an aging asset. They have a lot of land, if some bed units were made available to allow them to upgrade an old facility... you start to create opportunities. But these are projects

that will come up in years to come. I think 4500 Northlands offers a lot of opportunity, and we have other options with old assets that need to be upgraded or replaced, such as Spruce Grove, so that permits us to carry on without cannibalizing other facilities at this time.