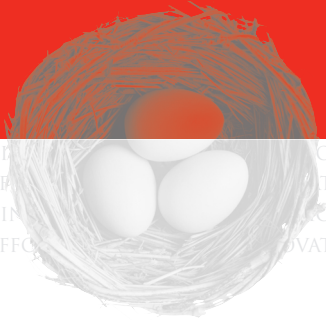


AFFORDABLE HOUSING INNOVATIONS



BEAVER FLATS PROTECTS WHISTLER EMPLOYEES FROM RISING RENTS

As a resort town, Whistler, British Columbia, knows few equals. During the winter, visitors can ski Blackcomb and Whistler—the two greatest vertical rise ski mountains in North America. In the summer, Whistler offers world-class golfing, hiking, biking, rafting, fishing, horseback riding, and rock climbing.

Not surprisingly, athletic minded vacationers flock to Whistler year around. But its popularity has also increased rents to the point where many people who work in Whistler can't afford to live there.

"Local businesses are having a hard time getting employees," says Marla Zucht with the Whistler Housing Authority, a subsidiary of the Resort Municipality of Whistler. "The jobs are here, but if people can't get housing, they're not going to come to Whistler. There's a need to have housing here for employees."

Launched in 1997, the Whistler Housing Authority has a mandate to provide housing for Whistler employees—gas station attendants, teachers, nurses, pharmacists, restaurant servers—the gamut of occupations that one finds in any bustling resort town. In March 1998, facing a potential housing crisis, the Whistler Housing Authority purchased a prominent property off the highway into town. The organization intended to use the site to build affordable housing exclusively for people who work full-time within Whistler's municipal boundaries.

Almost three years later, in December 2001, the Whistler Housing Authority opened the doors to Beaver Flats Employee Housing—a new three-storey 57-unit apartment building restricted to local people who work full-time in Whistler.

When the Whistler Housing Authority set out to design Beaver Flats, the organization was concerned as much with energy efficiency as with esthetics. "We wanted to make Beaver Flats exceptionally energy efficient for two reasons," says Ms. Zucht. "For one, it would reduce operating expenses and help us keep rents affordable. And two, it would serve as a model for the community—something that other developers could aspire to achieve."

Consequently, Beaver Flats includes a closed-loop geothermal heat pump, double glazed low-e windows, highly energy efficient appliances, a continuous exterior waterproof membrane, a sprayed on "outsulation" (a polyurethane foam), and a heat-recovery ventilation system, all of which combine to boost the building's energy efficiency and long-term energy savings.

Since size of apartment and size of rent bill tend to go hand in hand, the Whistler Housing Authority decided to make the Beaver Flat apartments functional, yet cozy. The complex includes four varieties of accommodation: studios, studios with lofts, one-bedroom units, and one-bedroom units with lofts. Calculated at \$1.25 a square foot, rents vary from \$580 to \$970 a month.

"Living at Beaver Flats, Whistler's employees don't have to compete with resort visitors for places to live," says Ms. Zucht. "By controlling the price of rents and restricting tenancy to Whistler employees, we provide a way for them to live much more affordably than they could were they paying market rates."

The Whistler Housing Authority is a finalist in the Technology and Production category of the 2002 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Housing Awards Program, **Affordable Housing Innovations**. The Housing Awards recognize individuals, companies and organizations that have made significant contributions to improving housing affordability in Canada.

For more information about the Whistler Housing Authority's Beaver Flats Employee Housing, please contact:

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