



Previous Hatcher Pass Development Concepts

1989 - The Hatcher Pass Master Development Plan (HPMP) was originally approved by The State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in March 1986. The plan was amended in 1989 to provide for a four-season resort. The development was anticipated to occur through several phases including ski area development, hotel development, golf course construction, recreational and real estate development. Phase one of this effort was the development of the ski area. The proposal was to build a 150-cabin gondola lift system to transport people up the mountain side. The rationale behind this method was to allow for non-skier use in the summer season as well as skier use in the winter months.

The ski area would have included a base lodge with offices, an aid station, equipment rental and repair space, retail space, tickets sale booths, and storage lockers. A maintenance storage building would also have been required. A mid-mountain lodge would be constructed for food service and ski school. A top terminal would include unheated space to shelter the gondolas as well as heated space for housing a ski patrol and public toilets. Two parking lots near the base lodge were envisioned with the use of shuttle buses to transport skiers from the parking area to the base lodge.

1998 - The Hatcher Pass Development Company (HPDC) proposed a ski area project in the Government Peak area. This project eventually was cancelled due to the inability of HPDC to find adequate financing for the project. The DNR also completed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) to transfer the Hatcher Pass lease area to the MSB. This proposed ski area was envisioned in four phases.

- Phase 1: Alpine Development
 - 2 chair lifts
 - Pony Tow
 - Base Area
 - Maintenance Area
- Phase 2:
 - Alpine Area Infrastructure
 - Snowmaking
 - Lighting

- Phase 3:
 - Village development in the Nordic area
 - Golf course
 - Clubhouse
 - Convention Center
 - Ranchette Development
 - Single Family Residential
 - Nordic Center & Trails
 - Equestrian Center & Trails
 - Snowpark
- Phase 4:
 - 2 additional chair lifts
 - Mid-mountain lodge
 - Secondary base
 - Village expansion

This development plan also included access to the Hatcher Pass facilities off Palmer-Fishhook Road with a bridge over the Little Susitna River.

1999 - In 1999 the MSB and HPDC applied for federal assistance for the first time to develop the day lodge facility for the proposed Hatcher Pass Ski Area. Since that time, the MSB received an earmark for \$1 million for roads and trails, and in 2008 the MSB sought federal legislation to combine other earmarks into the Hatcher Pass project. This has recently been approved by the US Congress. These combined earmarks total approximately \$5.7 million.

2002 - In 2002, Economics Research Associates in conjunction with Ecosign Mountain Resort Planners compiled an analysis of development potential in the Hatcher Pass ski area for the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority. It was stated in this analysis that the *previously proposed four season resort program was not economically viable in this location*. The underlying capital costs of this type of development as well as the inability for the resort to draw an adequate number of skiers from locations outside Alaska were given as examples of how these previous proposals were not economically viable.

This development plan specifically addressed alpine development and included a base area and parking lot to be located approximately 100 feet above the Little Susitna River, as well as lifts and trails that would be located directly above the base area. The base area would contain a day lodge as well as operational/service functions related to ski operations. The lifts would include a quadruple chairlift, a t-bar, platter lift and one carpet conveyor teaching lift. This concept also included ski trails associated with each lift as well as grooming, snowmaking, and night lighting.

The proposed base area would create a skier facility to provide basic amenities to a regional market, provide parking within a comfortable walking distance for skiers to eliminate the need for alternative transit, a drop-off area for cars, and to allow for the base area to be used for broader purposes in the summer. The Nordic area was not mentioned in this development plan.

2003 - In 2003, a Master Development Plan was compiled by Land Design North for the south side of Hatcher Pass. This plan addressed the potential for residential and commercial development on the south side of Hatcher Pass as well as Alpine skiing. This analysis determined that residential development in the Hatcher Pass area was both feasible and beneficial for the MSB. Several options for development of the south side were suggested. These options included 160 acres of large single family homes, multi-family housing and resort cluster housing set into the hillside, a Nordic village center of commercial mixed-use properties and a rustic recreation area.

This plan indicated that a world-class four season recreational community was feasible with development in the south side. Three components were stated to be necessary in order for this development to remain feasible. These components include: a Nordic Ski Center to serve as the backbone of both summer and winter operations; an Alpine Ski Venture funded with a joint public/private partnership; and residential and commercial land sales and development to generate proceeds to help offset the initial costs of developing this year-round facility.

2004 – In 2004, in response to a MSB issued Request for Proposals, JL Properties proposed a plan for specific development nodes that would support the four-season recreation infrastructure. Primary access to these development nodes would occur off Palmer-Fishhook Road with a bridge over the Little Susitna River. Other access would have been provided off of Edgerton Park Road.

This plan originally included a “village” located along the Little Susitna River and a variety of high-density and large-lot residential housing that would use approximately 600 acres of the approximately 2,000 acres of developable area on the south side. As part of this proposed development, the idea of including an extensive Nordic and multiple-use trail system was introduced for the first time.

Due to public opposition to the village and large scale residential development and other factors, JL Properties withdrew their interest in the project in 2006.