

Chapter 11

Decisions and Time Line for Development

For decades the public, administrators, and decision makers have talked and debated what this project should ultimately look like. They have ranged anywhere from a rope tow in the 50's and 60's to a very large four-season resort envisioned by Mitsui & Company, Ltd in the mid 80's.

“Hatcher Pass – A New Beginning” is the latest proposal to capture a winter recreational vision in a way that meets resident skier's dreams and needs.

Countless thousands of hours by hundreds of people have been spent on these dreams, visions and proposals. While incremental progress has been made over the years towards seeing the recreational opportunities become reality and some infrastructure improvements have been made, no final plan has ever been adopted.

In order to proceed the public and the Borough Assembly must decide whether the project should proceed or not. If it is to proceed, a time line and decision points must be agreed to.

Previous Chapters provide Hatcher Pass history, a new plan, a description of needed improvements and infrastructure, financial analysis, and examples of other similar ski area ownership and management, along with recommendations on ownership and management structure.

The cost to begin development of the skiing and other facilities outlined in “Hatcher Pass – A New Beginning” will never be less expensive than at the present time. For example, the cost of Lift 1 and 2 has gone up in price \$97,064 from January, 2008 to July 2008.

All indications from the recreation, tourism, and marketing analysis indicate that Hatcher Pass will prove to be social success in a relatively short period.

The independent financial analysis completed by Northern Economics verifies that Hatcher Pass will financially cover its operating costs and provide some additional revenue to help meet debt service within a short period.

In order to make “Hatcher Pass – A New Beginning” become reality it is important that a time schedule be established that will lead to opening of the ski areas at a predictable time. At the same time, it is also important to have built-in milestones or decision points along the way where the public and the Assembly will have the opportunity to make sure the project is on track or if changes need to be made.

Project Components

The following are the major components that all must interact together and in a coordinated manner to make this project become reality.

Conceptual Project

The first decision that must be made is what Hatcher Pass should look like and what facilities it should offer. This decision does not need to have all the details (such as funding sources, exact location of Nordic trails, location of access roads, etc.) worked out. However, it must provide a starting point for the next steps. There will be many further twists, turns and fine-tuning needed along the way, but a project conceptual plan must be adopted as the first building block.

“Hatcher Pass – A New Beginning” provides a solid starting point.

Environmental Analysis

DOWL Engineers is currently working on the Hatcher Pass environmental analysis. This process, while focused on the road and trails due to federal funds, will look at the environmental impacts of the entire project. In order to be comprehensive, it is important that the contractor and the federal and state regulatory agencies have an idea of Borough’s ultimate vision . This is directly tied to adoption of a conceptual project Plan.

The environmental analysis process has been specifically separated into three distinct phases or steps. At the end of each phase, the public and the Borough will have an opportunity to review the results, findings and recommendations before proceeding to the next step. Also at the conclusion of each step, the Borough can make modifications to the conceptual plan or direction. While not recommended, the Borough can also stop the process at any of these steps.

The environmental analysis will answer technical and scientific questions of what is possible and what is not (for example, can the area support housing and commercial development, and if so at what scale and limitations?). Based on this information the conceptual plan can “fine tuned” where necessary or appropriate.

The results of this entire process should be completed in 12 to 18 months.

SPUD and Hatcher Pass Management Plan

Using the results of the environmental analysis and the conceptual plan, adoption of a Special Planning Unit District (SPUD) and amending the Hatcher Pass Management Plan should occur as quickly as possible.

Adoption of these two documents will further “fine tune” the social aspects of the conceptual plan for the Hatcher Pass project.

Funding

Using the conceptual plan, the Borough should investigate funding options, which could include seeking private partners. Funding is a major driving factor in the ultimate look of Hatcher Pass. The conceptual plan provides a starting point for these discussions. Ultimately, financing will be the major component in the look of the project and whether it should proceed or not.

Organization and Management Structure

The proposed type of management needs to be decided at the time the conceptual plan is approved. It will take considerable time to draft and adopt ordinances to enact any type of management and personnel structure.

It would also be beneficial to have a “Board of Directors” in place as quickly as possible to guide the entire process, beginning with implementing the conceptual plan through all the steps outlined above.

Construction

Once all of the above steps have been completed, construction of the various facilities can begin. Construction of Phase I will likely take two full construction seasons and is very dependent on when funds become available and construction and procurement contracts are issued. For example, lead time for ski lifts is approximately one year from the date ordered until delivery. Erection and construction of the lift facilities will take a building season after that.

Time Line for Development

The GANTT (bar) chart on the following page provides a basic outline of project timeframe for the major actions, activities and when construction should be expected to take place.

