Skeetawk

HATCHER PASS, ALASKA

2024-2029 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Revised 10/13/2026

BY SKEETAWK MANAGEMENT & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Peak 4068

Introduction

This development plan is created to summarize the future infrastructure needs by Hatcher Alpine Xperience (HAX) dba **Skee**tawk. HAX is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to incrementally develop, operate, and maintain the alpine ski area, "Skeetawk" at Hatcher Pass, Alaska. The name "Skeetawk" is derived from the Dena'ina word Shk'ituk't, which means "where we slide down," and was chosen by the membership.

HAX's mission is to develop and maintain a regional alpine ski area in Hatcher Pass to promote safe outdoor recreation, education, and healthy lifestyles.

HAX dba Skeetawk was founded in 2015 by a group of passionate residents of the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Valley, Alaska, who wanted to create a ski area that would be accessible and affordable to everyone in their community. From 2016 to 2018, HAX planned, did community outreach, and fundraised to get the project started. By 2019 HAX had funded and built their first phase of the ski area, Phase 1a, which includes a triple chairlift giving skiers access to 30 skiable acres, as well as ski run clearing, parking lot expansion, a ticket booth, a modest warming hut, a snow cat storage building, signage, and portable restrooms.

Skeetawk opened for skiers/snowboarders starting during the Winter of 2019-20 on groomed trails, and their new ski lift area was open to the public by Winter 2020-21. In 2020 Skeetawk continued improvements on the ski area, including further development of backcountry access facilities, trail clearing/smoothing, and maintenance of backcountry trailhead parking and restroom facilities.

In 2021 Skeetawk added a Ski Patrol building at the top of the first lift, to increase safety for all participants. Skeetawk also doubled their indoor customer service area to facilitate ski/snowboard and avalanche safety equipment rentals. This expansion de-congested the warmup and food service area of their yurt. Skeetawk taught clinics in Youth Outdoor Survival, Wilderness First Aid/CPR, Terrain Park Safety, Avalanche Awareness in addition to private ski/snowboard lessons.

In 2022 a lighting infrastructure for the Phase 1a area was completed, and night skiing was opened to the public. This allowed the ski area to open for more after work/after school hours, giving the Mat-Su Borough residents greater outdoor recreation during the darkness of winter.

In 2023, construction was completed, and an indoor bathroom facility was opened, increasing the customer amenities onsite. As the tip of the spear for Phase 1b development, Skeetawk acquired a donated cabbed snowcat and is offering cat-skiing and facilitated the Arctic Winter Games in the mid-mountain terrain of Skeetawk's lease area for the 2023-2024 winter season. This operation will continue until a mid-mountain chair lift is installed.

HAX has a strong and committed Board of Directors that meets monthly, four full-time staff members (plus winter seasonal staff) and has had thousands of volunteer hours over the past few years. HAX has a 40-year long-term lease of over 1100 acres of skiable terrain with the Mat-Su Borough, and has received financial support from dozens of businesses, private foundations, and government agencies.

The following Project Development Plan outlines the future development of Skeetawk Ski Area. It was created using the foundation of many decades of research and planning by multiple organizations throughout the Mat-Su Borough. The State of Alaska's Hatcher Pass Management Plan and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's Hatcher Pass- Government Peak Unit Asset Management & Development Plan have been among our guiding documents. An Economic Analysis of Skeetawk's total buildout was completed in 2024 and is accompanying these documents as a guiding force for future development.

Skeetawk aims to become a year-round facility, supporting skiing and snowboarding in the winter months, hiking and mountain biking trails in the summer months, after-school ski and snowboard lessons for youth, and outdoor safety education.

Skeetawk has a proven history of efficiently administering quality projects in Phase 1a and intends to continue this practice for the future projects of Phase 1b and Phase 2 outlined herein.

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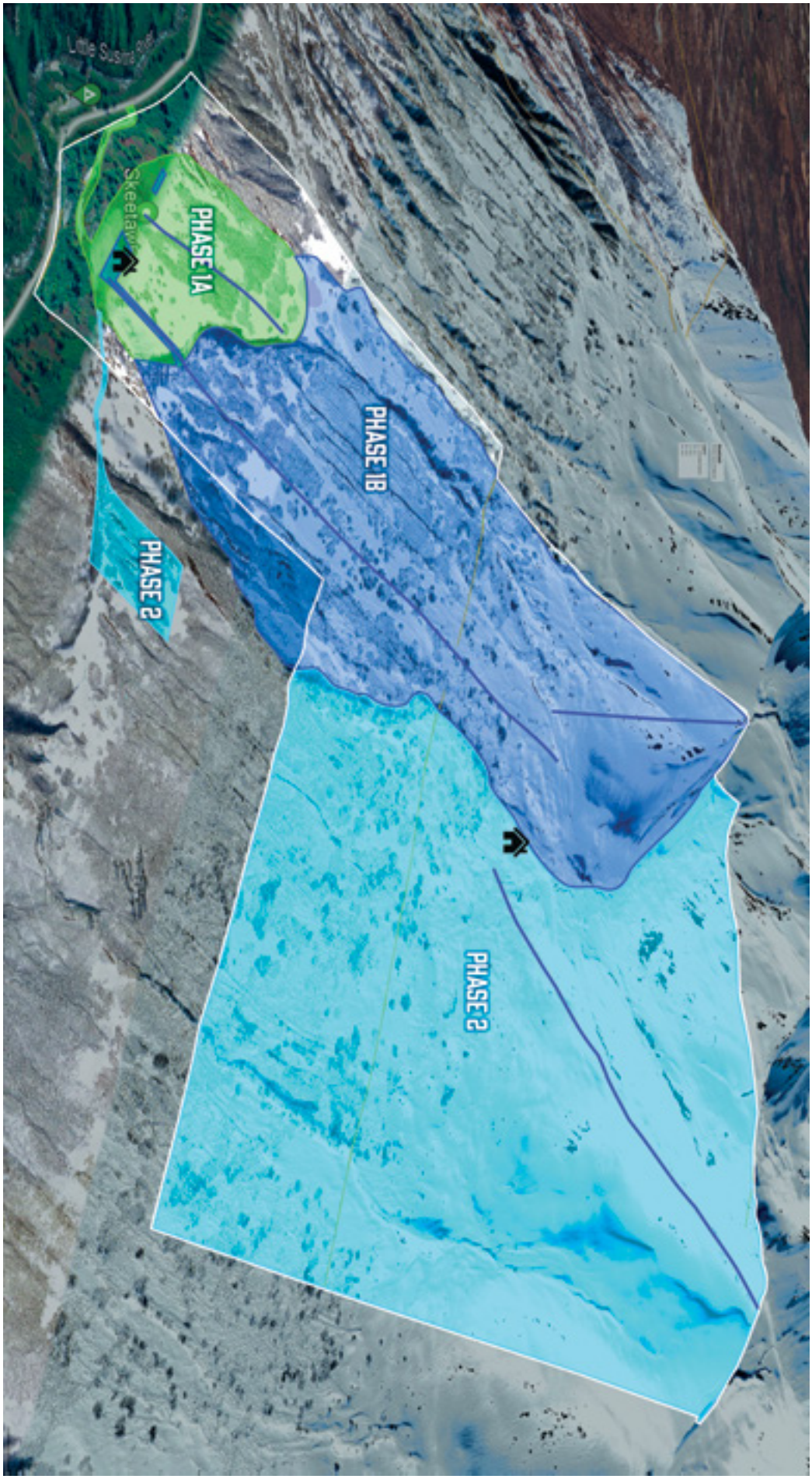

Little Susitna River
Skeetawk
PHASE 1A
PHASE 1B
PHASE 2
PHASE 2

Project List and Priorities

The following pages include base project information such as description, cost, and why they are needed. Not included in this document is the additional engineering and planning information that is gathered for each project, such as engineering plans, contractor quotes, permits, and correspondence with officials and vendors. Contact Skeetawk Management for additional information. The phasing of the development and order of priority is as follows:

Phase 1b (2024-2029)

These items have been identified as a very high priority for Skeetawk Operations, to create a quality alpine experience within Skeetawk's current lease area. These items have prospective funders identified.

1) Bus Accessible Road

2) Surface Lift

3) Electrical Infrastructure

4) Phase 1a Snowmaking

5) Day Lodge / Education Center

6) Trails / Grooming / Snow Management Infrastructure

7) Phase 1b Avalanche Mitigation Infrastructure

8) Lift 2 (To Mid Mountain)

Phase 2 (2029-2035)

9) Phase 2 Avalanche Mitigation Infrastructure

10) Lift 3 (To Peak 4068)

11) Tubing Infrastructure

12) Lift 4 (To Frostbite Ridge)

13) Mid Mountain Chalet

14) Campground with RV plugs / Additional Parking

Project # 1

Bus Accessible Grade

Project Description: This project will construct a road between the State maintained Hatcher Pass Road to Skeetawk's base area.

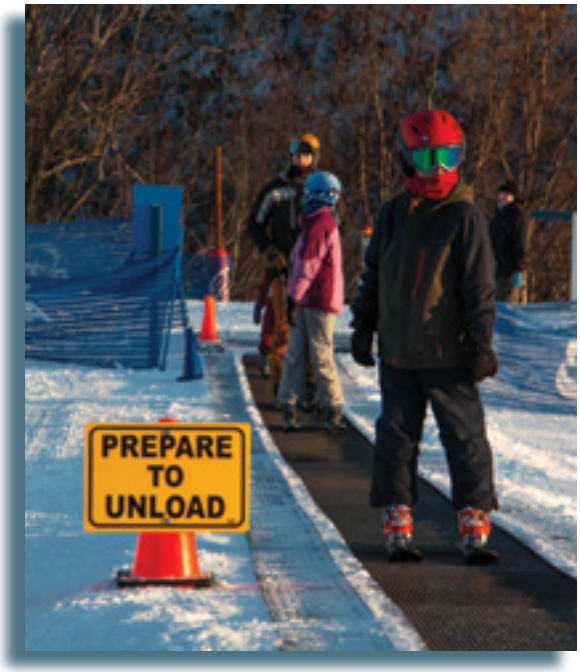
Why Needed? Current access road exceeds 12% grade. For School bus access to occur, grades below 8% are required by MSB policy and for safety.

Approximate Cost: $500,000 (for road only). Quote in progress for parking costs.

Likely Funding Source: Mat-Su Borough (Funding request in progress)

Project # 2

Surface Lift



Project Description: Install a conveyor type surface lift to increase ski/snowboard lesson quality and provide adaptive instruction for people with physical and mental disability.

Why Needed? More enjoyable introductory lessons are foundational for ensuring students, especially children, continue the learning process of alpine recreation. Students with physical and mental disability must have a lower risk mode of uphill transportation when starting the learning process.

Cost: $172,100

Funding Source: Multiple source funding (Project is fully funded)

Project # 3

Electrical Infrastructure

Project Description: All MEA mainline electrical extensions (supply side of meters) will need to be constructed. Project has been assigned to a current Matanuska Electric Association work order. Routes of main lines have been selected. The preliminary load list has been generated by HAX's volunteer electrical engineer, Bill Starn P.E.

Why Needed? To support future lodge and lift expansion, MEA mainline extensions and new transformers are needed.

Approximate Cost: Quote in progress. MEA CQ Ref #: 2487

Likely Funding Source: CAPSIS (Funding request in progress)

Skeetawk has chosen a Snowmaking system with a unique sustainable energy feature. With this system in place, Skeetawk will have the option to generate hydro-electric power utilizing the Snowmaking Infrastructure when Snowmaking operations are not occuring.

PROJECT # 4

Phase 1a Snowmaking

Project Description: Phase 1a 30-acre snowmaking area, all areas accessed by Lift 1

Why Needed? Snowmaking is to compensate for low snow years and early season needs. Snowmaking would allow Skeetawk to regularly be one of the first ski areas in Alaska to open. Snowmaking snow density also allows a durable surface that withstands ski-race and other competition type traffic.

Approximate Cost: $2,500,000

Likely Funding Source: Mat-Su Health Foundation, Rasmuson Foundation, State of Alaska CAPSIS funding (Funding request in progress)

Project # 5

Day Lodge / Education Center

Project Description: Due to the large debt service that the organization will incur with Lift 2, Skeetawk is pursuing a more cost effective Day Lodge solution through semi-permanent infrastructure. This structure will be a single story construction, with the option to relocate to mid-mountain (prior to the chalet) once Lift 2 year-over-year revenue is realized. Additional revenue from Lift 2 customers will allow for a permanent base area Day Lodge / Education Center in future years.

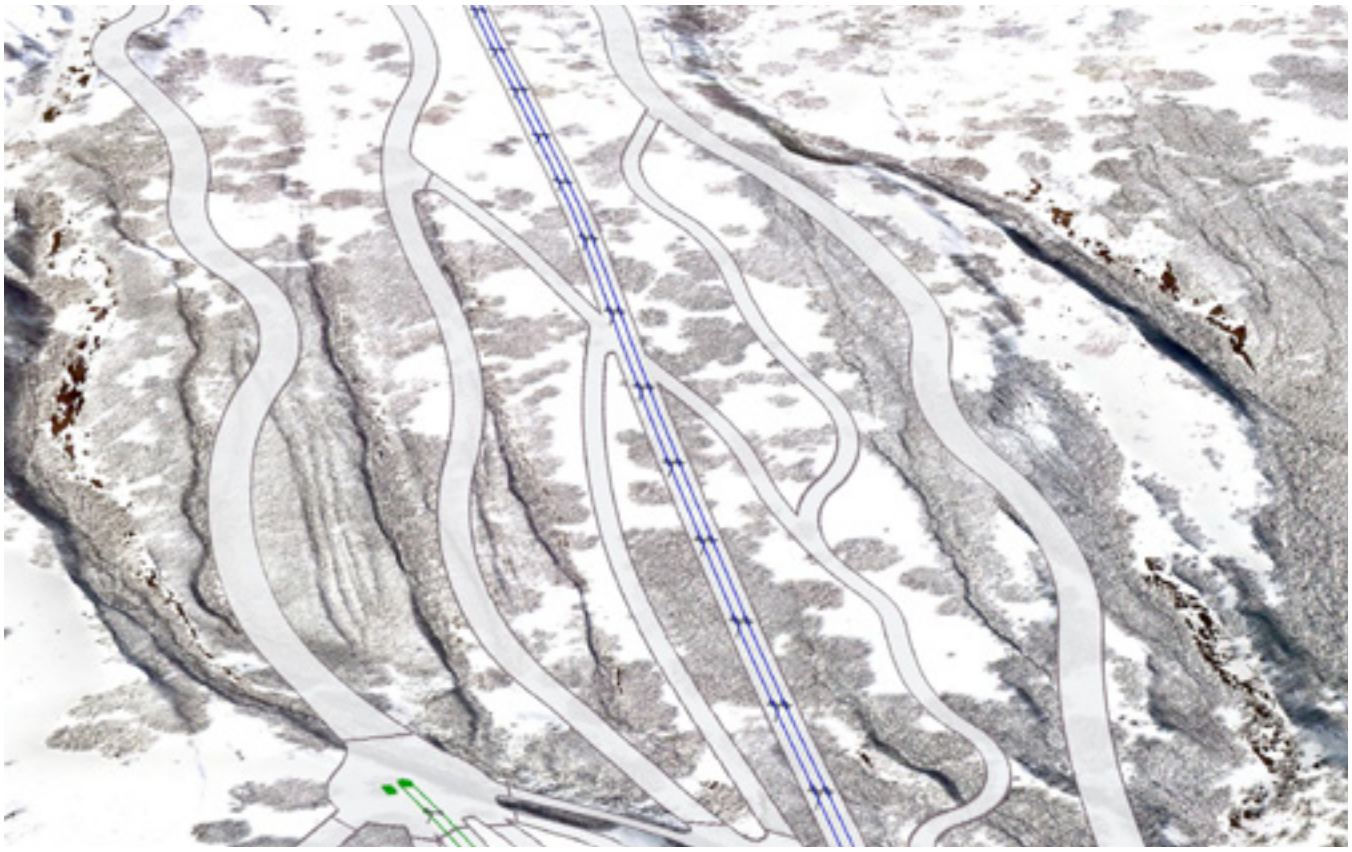
Why Needed? To provide shelter to guests, and meet ammenity needs for pass sales, rental equipment, administration, food and beverage, education, and special events.

Approximate Cost: $1.6m – $3m depending on scaling ($160 per square foot)

Likely Funding Source: Federal EDA Grant, Federal Transportation Administration funding, Charitable Foundation funding, or Financing

PROJECT # 6

Trails / Grooming / Snow Management Infrastructure



Project Description: Clear cutting and re-grading the terrain to create a ski trail network to be utilized by Lift 2, and to lay the foundation for a summer trail infrastructure in the mid-mountain terrain. The purchase of additional snowcats to groom all the skiable terrain.

Why Needed? To provide year-round recreation opportunities

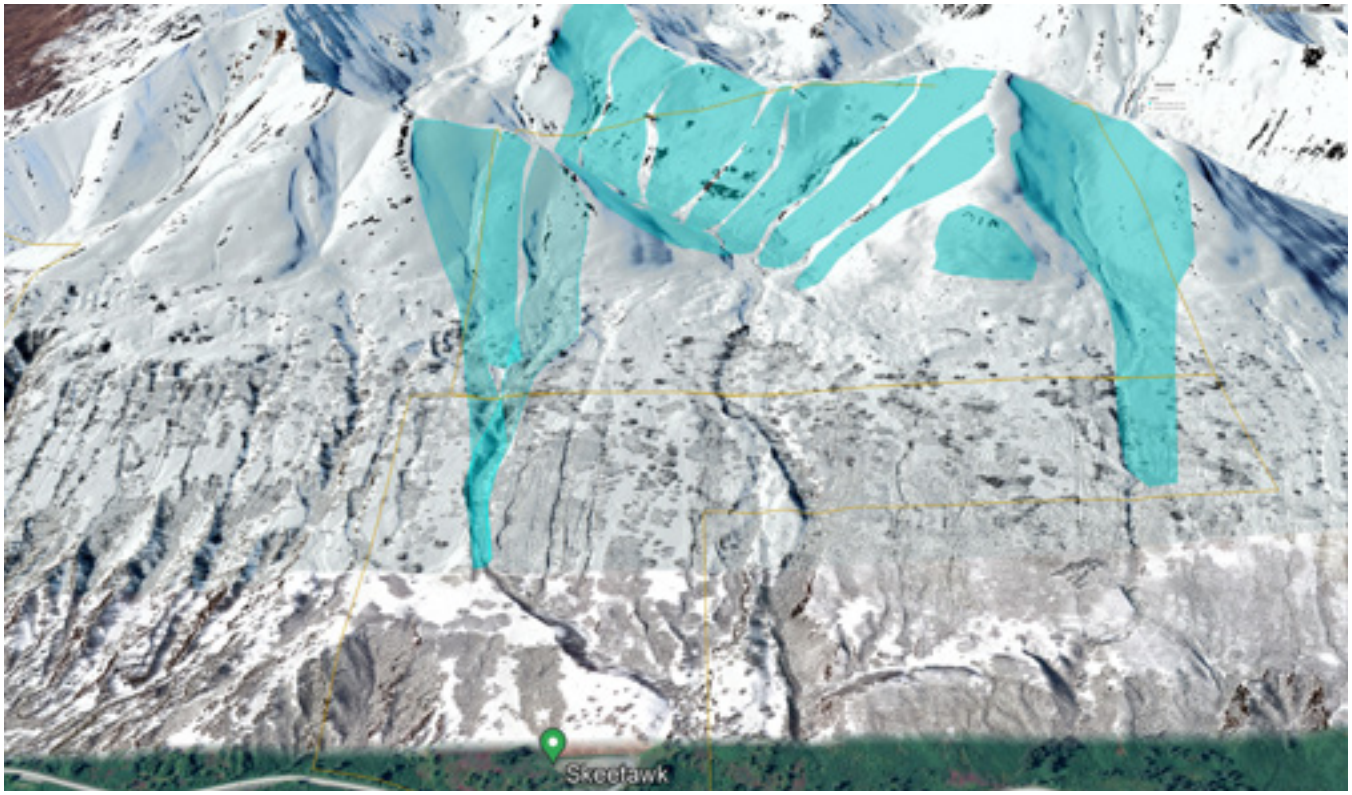
Approximate Cost: $900,000

A mid-mountain Cat Road and another prominent trails have been constructed with funds from the MSB, MSTPF, and MEA Operation Roundup. Significant further trail construction and snowcats are needed to fully utilize all available mid-mountain terrain in Skeetawk's lease area.

Likely Funding Source: Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation and DNR Recreational Trails Program (Funding request in progress)

Project # 7

Phase 1b Avalanche Mitigation Infrastructure



Project Description: General infrastructure for basic avalanche mitigation explosive program

Why Needed? There are two primary assets being protected by avalanche mitigation at a ski area. First, the people moving on and around avalanche terrain. Generally, if the avalanche hazard becomes unmanageable, you can remove the people and greatly reduce or eliminate risk. Hazard reduction for this can often be accomplished by ski patrollers conducting active mitigation and terrain closures. The second asset in consideration is infrastructure which includes buildings, lifts, parking lots, travel corridors, consistent operations and more. You cannot remove permanent infrastructure from the avalanche hazard so actions must be aimed to combat the larger low frequency event. Calculated planning for infrastructure layout paired with strategic avalanche mitigation tactics can offer engineered solutions for long-term survival of on mountain infrastructure. Ski area operations naturally encompass a combination of all mitigation solutions including active avalanche control, terrain closures, and engineered solutions.

Approximate Cost: $195,000.

Likely Funding Source: Financing

PROJECT# 8

Lift 2 (To Mid Mountain)

Project Description: Build a mile-long lift from the Skeetawk base area to the saddle at tree line. This lift will allow skiers access to over 500 acres of intermediate and advanced terrain.

To ensure accessible and affordable outdoor recreation to Southcentral Alaska, the Board of Directors (BoD) is pursuing a Lift 2 solution that will maximize summer tourism revenue in addition to allowing for wintertime alpine recreation. The BoD has chosen a detatchable gondola for the Lift 2 application to ensure low wintertime pass prices, and sustainable year round revenue to bolster the organization's financial health, catalyzing future growth.

Why Needed? To provide access to more acreage for alpine recreation.

Approximate Cost: $14,000,000 – $18,000,000 includes electrical to top lift and access road. Quotes have been received from Leitner-Poma, Doppelmayr, and Pro Alpin.

Likely Funding Source: Financing through traditional loans and state/federal guarantee programs

PROJECT # 9

Phase 2 Avalanche Mitigation Infrastructure

Project Description: Installment of "Remote Avalanche Control Systems" (RACS) capable of remote triggering avalanche paths that impact infrastructure and main ski area operations.

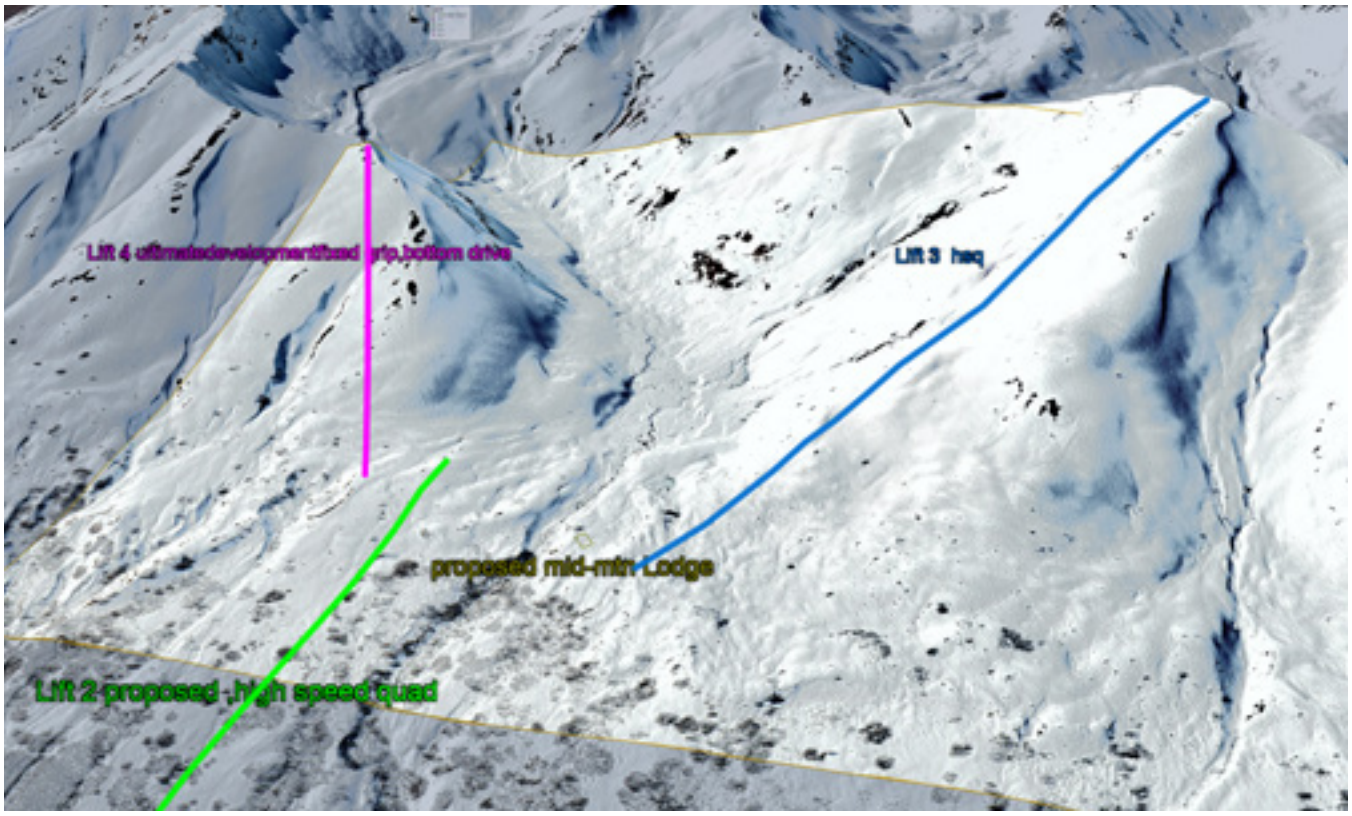
Why Needed? Additional Avalanche Mitigation infrastructure is needed with the expansion into more skiable terrain with Phase 2.

Approximate Cost: $3,700,00

Likely Funding Source: Financing

Project # 10

Lift 3 (To Peak 4068)



Project Description: Chairlift to the top of peak 4068. This chairlift alignment is shown in blue in the photo above.

Why Needed? To access further intermediate and advanced level skiable terrain in Skeetawk's lease area, decongesting the intermediate terrain accessed by Lift 2.

Approximate Cost: $6,000,000 – $12,000,000. Quotes have been received from Leitner-Poma, Doppelmayr, and Pro Alpin.

Likely Funding Source: Financing

Project # 11

Tubing Infrastructure

Project Description: A tubing hill will be constructed on the north side of Skeetawk's lease area, away from ski traffic, to minimize conflicts. Associated with tubing will be required storage, maintenance, and sales infrastructure that supports the tubing hill and the ski area.

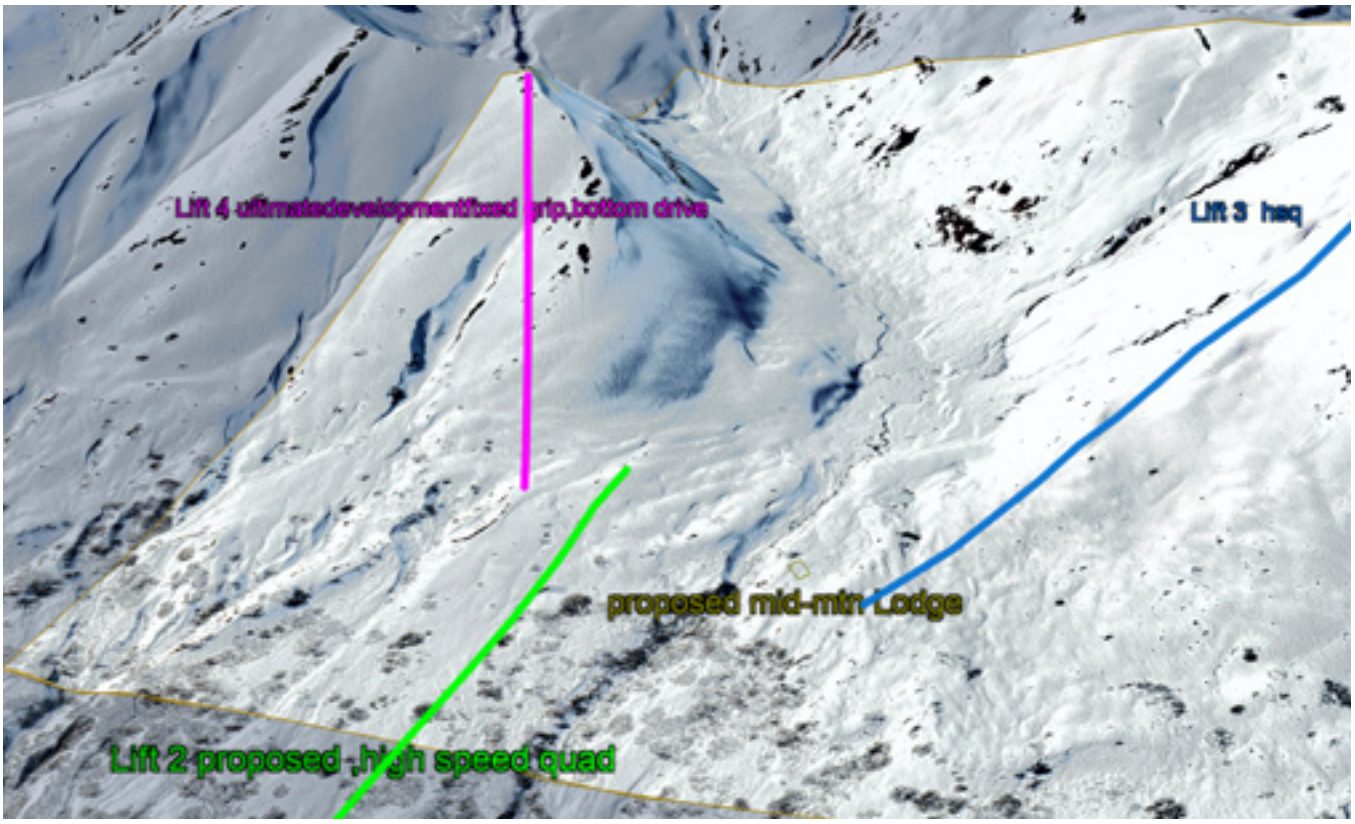
Why Needed? Tubing has been proven by other ski areas to be financially viable and a fun service to provide families who don't or can't ski.

Approximate Cost: Quote in progress

Likely Funding Source: Not Identified

Project # 12

Lift 4 (Frostbite)



Project Description: To build a lift (pink in image above) to Frostbite Ridge

Why Needed? This lift is needed to access black diamond and double black diamond terrain, which in the previous lifts is limited. This lift would also enable large scale competitions at Skeetawk and enhance tourism. Side country options also would be enhanced along Frostbite Ridge

Approximate Cost: $7,500,000

Likely Funding Source: Not Identified

Project # 13

Mid-Mountain Chalet

Project Description: Build a mid-mountain day use chalet, including food service, indoor and outdoor seating, and additional space for ski patrol and maintenance use.

Prior to a permanent building at mid-mountain, Skeetawk has chosen a base area Day Lodge / Education Center solution that can easily be relocated from the base area to mid-mountain. This facility is designed for both locations, and will incrementally increase customer ammenities across the mountain in the most cost-effective manner.

Why Needed? To provide a resting area and warming facility mid mountain and include the required employee office space to support the ski area upper mountain facilities.

Approximate Cost: $8,000,000 – $17,000,000 but specific size and layout needs to be identified.

Likely Funding Source: Financing

PROJECT # 14

Campground with RV plugs Additional Parking

Project Description: Install RV Plugs, picnic tables, and other camping spaces within the Skeetawk parking lot area.

Why Needed? To increase income and allow for overnight recreation opportunities.

Approximate Cost: Quote in progress

Likely Funding Source: Not Identified