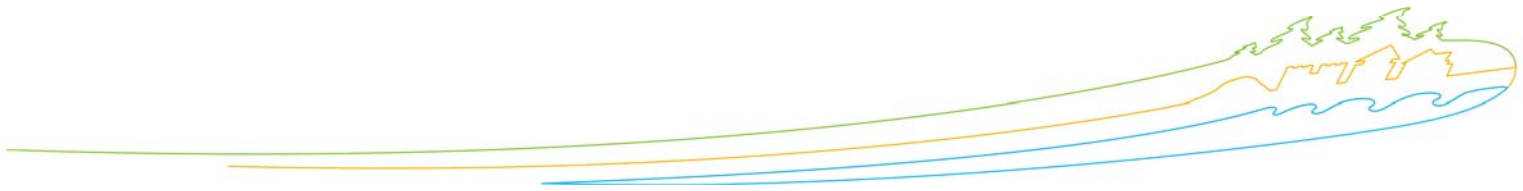




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Lake Louise Ski Area Site Guidelines for Development and Use

Banff National Park

July 2015





Statement of Concurrence from the Chief Executive Officer of Parks Canada

The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development 2013 report concluded that Parks Canada is fulfilling its key responsibilities for maintaining or restoring ecological integrity in Canada's national parks and has developed a solid framework of policies, directives, and guidelines.

The Lake Louise Site Guidelines for Development and Use represent a significant step towards ensuring ongoing protection of Banff National Park, while sustaining its unique appeal as a national park destination within a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Banff National Park, Canada's first national park, is one of the world's premier visitor destinations, attracting more than three million visitors each year. In its efforts to protect and preserve this spectacular landscape for future generations, Banff National Park has also earned a reputation as a global leader in innovative and leading-edge conservation initiatives.

Banff has become an international model for a variety of bear conservation practices - from its monitoring and aversive conditioning approaches, to its wildlife guardian program and the pioneering of bear-proof garbage bins. The park also has the most numerous and varied wildlife highway crossing structures in the world used by bears and other species, and it supports the world's longest, year-round highway monitoring program and largest data set on wildlife mitigation.

Banff National Park has led the way in aquatic restoration. It has worked to remove barriers such as dams or install passable culverts in streams and rivers to improve connectivity to important habitat. In addition, Banff was the first to take steps in the recovery of the endangered Banff Springs Snail, long before it was protected under the *Species at Risk Act*.

Banff is recognized as a leader in fire management and now carefully uses prescribed fires to help maintain forest health and biodiversity – four are planned for the park this year. And planning is well underway to reintroduce plains bison to Banff National Park, a project that will see this Canadian wildlife icon return to traditional grazing lands for the first time in over 100 years.

At the same time, Parks Canada is the country's number-one provider of Canadian tourism destinations. Parks Canada has an overarching obligation to work closely with the people and communities whose livelihood depends on visitor spending. Parks Canada supports initiatives by the tourism industry that enhance visitor experiences that connect people to our treasured places to foster meaningful and lasting connections. For many Canadians, downhill skiing in iconic Banff and Jasper National Parks is a regular pastime, a cherished memory or a bucket-list activity, fostering a lifelong relationship with our national parks that will help ensure their future on our landscape for generations to come.

Parks Canada approaches planning with the Mountain Parks ski areas carefully and in a principled fashion, respecting the rigorous requirements of *Ski Area Management Guidelines*



2006, our governing policy instrument, and the legal requirements of our governing legislation, including the *Canada National Parks Act*, *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012*, and *Species at Risk Act*.

The story of downhill skiing in Canada's mountain national parks began in the 1920's and has evolved over time as the sport has developed. The four ski areas in Banff and Jasper National Parks (Mount Norquay, Sunshine Village, Lake Louise and Marmot Basin) continue to enjoy a loyal following and are renowned for the exceptional experiences that they offer. Similarly, our knowledge of ecological integrity and our understanding of the state of our parks have evolved over time. Facilitating memorable visitor experiences that leave these special places unimpaired for future generations remains a key park management objective.

While skiing has occurred in the vicinity of Skoki and Temple Lodge since the 1930's, the Lake Louise Ski Area as we know it started development in the late 1950's. Today the ski area covers most parts of two mountains with a modern lift system that provides a range of terrain and runs that start in the high alpine and end in the valley bottoms. Because of the extensive amount of varied and challenging terrain, and dramatic views of Victoria Glacier and Lake Louise unique to its national park setting, the ski area has become internationally recognized, attracting skiers and summer visitors from around the world. Ski magazines often rate the resort as one of the top ski areas in North America. As a result, the ski area contributes significantly to the winter economy of the communities of Banff and of Lake Louise, as well as to the whole southern Alberta region.

To respond to the evolving nature of the industry, and to continue to meet the demands of visitors, Lake Louise would like to renew its services and facilities. To meet this challenge, Parks Canada and Lake Louise worked together to develop these Site Guidelines, which provide clear direction in terms of allowable commercial development, growth and visitor opportunities for the future.

For ski areas, Site Guidelines serve as a useful planning tool. They describe the nature and scope of development and use that can be considered in the future and identify proposed permanent growth limits. The *Site Guidelines* are intended to serve as a road map for both Parks Canada and the ski area operator and ensure that decisions are consistent with Parks Canada's mandate, the *Ski Area Management Guidelines 2006*, the park management plan, and the needs of the ski area.



Ski Area Management Guidelines: Five Principles

The *Ski Area Management Guidelines 2006* govern planning for ski areas in the mountain national parks. The guidelines clarify the type of land use that can be considered in these areas. The Lake Louise Ski Area Site Guidelines apply five key principles from the Ski Area Management Guidelines.

1. The approach taken to manage growth, and the preparation of the Site Guidelines and long-range plans at ski areas, will be similar to that taken for communities and outlying commercial accommodation.

Similar to the approach that was previously established for managing national park communities and outlying commercial accommodations (OCAs), Parks Canada will carefully consider managed, limited growth at the mountain national park ski areas within specified parameters. Negotiated, permanent growth limits and clearly articulated management parameters will address ecological challenges, contribute to a higher quality visitor experience, and support Lake Louise ski area's efforts to remain financially viable.

The potential development contemplated in these Site Guidelines will be advanced through subsequent long-range plans. Potential development will take place over time and will balance key components such as lifts, terrain, day lodges, parking and other services. Issues regarding infrastructure, parking and staff housing will be addressed before any development takes place.

2. Inside the existing developed area, new development may be considered if potential ecological impacts can be mitigated.

To prevent any significant impact on wildlife, vegetation and aquatic environments, the Site Guidelines include key ecological management parameters. Development proposals must clearly demonstrate that these parameters will be achieved.

The existing ski area lease covers 2,190 hectares. Much of the existing lease has not been developed for skiing and lies outside its developed area (refer to map 2). The developed area includes ski runs, gladed areas, buildings, parking lots and other structures. Initiatives that the ski area may wish to pursue that can be considered within this area, if advanced as part of formal long-range plan proposal, include:

- new lifts, runs and gladed areas;
- run widening;
- expanded terrain covered by snowmaking;
- expanded parking inside the existing developed area;
- mass transit;
- expansion of existing day lodges (commercial space); and



- development of warming huts.

Consistent with the *Ski Area Management Guidelines 2006*, in recognition that it will take time to prepare a long-range plan, Parks Canada may consider projects following the approval of Site Guidelines, but in advance of the first long-range plan, if proposals are “entirely within the existing Developed Area, do not contribute significantly to cumulative effects, are not linked to other projects and long-range plan decisions and do not result in incremental expansion.”

Examples of Lake Louise projects that could be advanced immediately include:

- replacement of existing lifts;
- parking lot improvements within existing footprint;
- rock or other hazard removal within existing ski terrain unless otherwise noted in the Site Guidelines;
- improvements to Sunset, Wounded Knee and Home Run skiways;
- temporary snow fencing and farming;
- minor terrain modifications to address safety and environmental issues consistent with the criteria identified in these Site Guidelines;
- minor improvements to existing snowmaking infrastructure; and
- some building replacement and renovations.

3. Outside the developed area, new development may be considered if it results in a substantial environmental gain.

- The Lake Louise Ski Area Site Guidelines contain four key proposals that can be considered substantial environmental gains, including:
 - Removal of Purple and Wolverine Bowl lands from the ski area lease. These lands have long been identified by Parks Canada as important wildlife habitat and as a corridor link with soil and vegetation complexes with groundwater that feeds into Corral Creek;
 - Removal of land associated with the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor from the ski area. The addition of these lands to the protected area of the park will provide greater certainty that wildlife movement through these areas will remain unimpaired;
 - Relocation of summer use to improve grizzly bear habitat. Moving summer season sightseeing and hiking to the upper ridge of Mount Whitehorn will relocate visitors and operational use away from prime mid-mountain summer grizzly bear habitat; and



- Significant reduction of water withdrawal during low flows from the Pipestone River and Corral Creek. High-volume water withdrawal from the Pipestone River in the fall for snow making during low flow will be reduced with the introduction of reservoirs to be charged during high flow. These measures will protect listed Species at Risk (species of concern), including Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Bull Trout.

The Lake Louise Ski Area has agreed to these substantial environmental gains to make it possible for a number of initiatives that would be considered exceptions to the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*. Exceptions include:

- Parks Canada will issue winter-use-only Licences of Occupation for West and Hidden Bowls for lands currently outside the ski area lease. While one lift can be proposed in Hidden Bowl, no lifts are allowed in West Bowl. There will be no cut runs in the bowls, and no grooming, although some limited glading and bowl egress trails will be allowed. The ski area will conduct avalanche control and provide safety patrols;
- The ski area will be allowed to develop Richardson's Ridge and the West Juniper areas as lifted beginner and intermediate terrain;
- The ski area can develop a lodge in the vicinity of the top terminal of the Grizzly Gondola to replace the use of the mid-mountain Whitehorn Lodge in the summer. In winter, the lodge will provide additional day lodge support skier services, relieving current congestion at other lodges and improving visitor experience; and
- Terrain modifications will be allowed on three existing skiways that pose skier safety challenges because they are narrow, congested, prone to icing, and have sudden slope transitions.

All potential future initiatives that are being considered as exceptions to the *Ski Area Management Guidelines 2006* must be advanced by Lake Louise as part of their long-range plan and the associated application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. A new lease that confirms the lease boundary reconfiguration (including the concurrent Licences of Occupation for Hidden and West Bowls) must be in place before exception proposals can proceed.

In accordance with the *Canada National Parks Act*, adjustments to the leasehold boundaries must be reflected in an amendment to Schedule 5, requiring an act of parliament. In addition, areas removed from the lease would be added to the declared wilderness area of the park through an amendment to the *National Parks Wilderness Area Declaration Regulations*. These amendments would result in a net increase in declared wilderness area for the park which already represents over 95% of Banff National Park. Declared wilderness designation means no commercial development is allowed.

In total, if all the exceptions were to proceed, the proposed boundary changes would see the current ski area leasehold of 2,190 hectares be reduced by approximately 30 per cent, to 1,521 hectares with approximately 669 hectares of ecologically sensitive land returning to the



protected zones of Banff National Park. To put 669 hectares in context, this area is a close equivalent to the areas of the Mount Norquay and Marmot Basin ski areas combined or more than 800 Canadian football fields.

4. *Ski areas will contribute to a unique, memorable national park experience and promote public appreciation and understanding of the heritage values of the park, the world heritage site and local conservation initiatives.*

Improvements to lifts, day lodges, parking, runs and ski terrain, if advanced as proposals, will enhance the skier experience. To complement these efforts, and to reinforce the location of the ski area in a national park, the ski area will:

- apply Mountain Park ski area best management practices;
- develop and apply an architectural theme for building development and renovation and signage; and
- develop a ski-area specific best management practice for managing noise and external lighting.

The current Lake Louise Ski Area summer use program reflects a suite of conditions and limitations that were put in place in 2002 primarily to protect grizzly bears while allowing visitors the opportunity to enjoy the dramatic, iconic views of Victoria Glacier and Lake Louise. The program has been a success both for grizzly bears and visitors. The existing summer use program may continue until a long-range plan is completed.

The Site Guidelines outline specific parameters and limitations for proposals for changes to summer use. Decisions on any changes will be made in a long-range plan subject to the application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. The Site Guidelines allow the Lake Louise Ski Area to advance summer use relocation and extend gondola operating hours subject to a number of requirements. These include undisturbed periods of time for wildlife, no use of Whitehorn Lodge in the summer and restrictions and limits on vehicle disturbance, noise and lighting.

To ensure substantive improvements to the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor, the Site Guidelines require the ski area to construct a wildlife crossing structure for Whitehorn Road and relocate the Fish Creek Road and trailhead parking area.

In addition, the ski area must prepare a Heritage Tourism Strategy to include winter and summer education. Programs for visitors and ski area staff will help increase the awareness and understanding of the heritage values of the park and its world heritage site status. Education and interpretation will continue to be a cornerstone of summer operations and will help further understanding and the protection of grizzly bears.



5. Ski areas will be leaders in environmental management, stewardship and best practices.

The Site Guidelines set out the parameters for attaining resort balance by ensuring long-range plan proposals consider parking, traffic circulation, skier congestion, infrastructure impacts, staff accommodation and other aspects. The long-range plans also have to consider the impacts of their proposals within the current national park community and outlying commercial accommodation growth limits outlined in the park management plan.

The Site Guidelines also contain a number of specific requirements the ski area must complete related to environmental management and visitor experience. These include an Environmental Management and Monitoring System Strategy, a Water Management and Snowmaking Infrastructure Plan, a Ski Run and Vegetation Management Improvement Strategy, a Parking and Transportation Management Strategy, and a Heritage Tourism Strategy. The ski area must also apply Mountain Park Ski Area Best Management Practices for Development in Jasper and Banff National Parks, which outline protection measures for routine projects.

Conclusion

The Lake Louise Site Guidelines for Development and Use and its associated Strategic Environmental Assessment detail what can occur over a period of years to ensure any resort development is balanced, improves visitor experience and ensures that ecological integrity is maintained or improved. The Site Guidelines provide the framework regarding what can be brought forward in future long-range plans, and the parameters and requirements that must be met.

The substantial reduction in the leasehold area, improvements to the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor, improved mid-mountain habitat for grizzly bears and other wildlife, aquatic systems improvements, the establishment of permanent limits to growth, the enhancement of environmental stewardship programs and new education programs for skiers and ski area staff on the natural and cultural heritage values of Banff National Park, collectively represent a major commitment to conservation by the owners/operators of the Lake Louise Ski Area that will contribute to the protection of Banff National Park's ecological integrity over the long term. At the same time, improvements to ski terrain, lifts, facilities, services and public education opportunities will enhance the winter and summer visitor experience.

New summer hours linked with the relocation of visitor use to Eagle Ridge, should these be advanced through a long-range plan, will be considered consistent with the parameters and requirements of the Site Guidelines and the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

With approval of these Site Guidelines, the Lake Louise Ski Area will be well positioned to play an ongoing leadership role within the skiing sector in the use, enjoyment and protection of Banff National Park.



Lake Louise Ski Area Site Guidelines for Development and Use

Approved by

Alan Lafourelle
Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada Agency

Recommended by

Melanie Kwong
Field Unit Superintendent
Lake Louise/Yoho/Kootenay Field Unit



The Lake Louise Ski Area Letter of Concurrence

The Lake Louise Ski Area (Lake Louise/LLSA) firmly supports both the content and the intent of these Site Guidelines.

Lake Louise understands that future development proposals that are clearly consistent with the Site Guidelines and are advanced through a Long-Range Plan and the associated application of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act will be supported by Parks Canada.

Further, LLSA believes these Site Guidelines represent a sincere and environmentally-progressive effort on the part of the ski area, in a collaborative negotiation with Parks Canada carried out with mutual good faith, to ensure that Lake Louise can achieve its primary goal – namely that LLSA epitomizes a world-class, National Park Ski Resort that can also offer a world-class, all-season sight-seeing and educational component that is fully consistent with Canadian National Park values and goals.

To achieve these objectives, Lake Louise has offered significant leasehold reductions and a number of highly positive ecological initiatives, which in totality are expected to result in significant overall environmental gains, and to more than compensate for the exceptions contained within the Guidelines.

Lake Louise understands that, following the formalization of these Guidelines, a new, mutually acceptable 42-year lease, together with the various accompanying and mutually acceptable Licenses of Occupation, as outlined in the Guidelines, including provisions for negotiations of renewals of the new Lease and Licenses, will be negotiated with Parks Canada. LLSA also understands that the existing lease, with all of its terms and conditions, will remain in full effect, until such new Lease and Licenses of Occupation are signed by Parks Canada and Lake Louise.

Lake Louise further understands that the issuance of a new 42-year lease is contingent on amendments to Schedule 5 of the Canada National Parks Act and the associated National Parks Wilderness Area Declaration Regulations, enshrining the new lease boundaries into law. Lake Louise expects that the Government of Canada will move expeditiously with these amendments to ensure the issuance of a new lease so that projects approved in the first long-range plan can be implemented immediately.

Finally, Lake Louise understands too, that, on ratification of these Site Guidelines, even prior to the issuance of a new lease and licenses of occupation, LLSA may now begin the Long-Range Planning process, which can be undertaken in entirety or incrementally, at the discretion of the ski area. It is Lake Louise's clear expectation that the individual projects and initiatives outlined in these Guidelines can be reasonably attainable and without undue delay, in accordance with the stated goal of the over-arching Ski Area Management Guidelines of providing a climate of reasonable land-use and overall business certainty in which the Mountain Park ski areas can operate.

Lake Louise wishes to thank Parks Canada for its intent to support these initiatives, which from a policy perspective, Parks Canada has determined to be acceptable as evidenced by inclusion in these Site Guidelines.



Lake Louise strongly believes that it is highly important that the collaborative approach that has formed the foundation of these Site Guidelines be continued all through the forthcoming Lease and Long-Range Planning negotiations and processes, and that the mutual sincerity and associated goodwill that this collaboration has generated will facilitate achieving the considerable potential of the Guidelines to provide significant benefits, going forward, to both ecological integrity and visitor experience.

Approved by

Per; Charlie Locke, President/Proprietor



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1 Introduction

Across Canada, Parks Canada's system of national parks and national historic sites serves to protect and present nationally significant examples of our country's heritage. As the federal agency charged with the task of managing these special places on behalf of Canadians, Parks Canada's fundamental responsibilities consist of fostering public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment while protecting ecological and commemorative integrity.

The Lake Louise Ski Area is one of four long-standing, internationally recognized downhill ski areas in Banff and Jasper National Parks. It is also a key summer attraction for visitors. Parks Canada supports a healthy and viable ski industry consistent with the *Banff National Park Management Plan* which recognizes that a carefully planned and managed ski area can contribute to meaningful engagement of park visitors in both winter and summer seasons, while complementing the conservation and restoration objectives of the federal government.

The development of the *Lake Louise Ski Area Site Guidelines for Development and Use (Site Guidelines)* for the development and use of each ski area in the mountain parks is a key step in ski area planning. These guidelines work towards establishing the scope, management parameters and conditions on which future development and use proposals may be considered for the foreseeable future.

1.1 Ski Area Planning and Development Review Process

The *Ski Area Management Guidelines (2006)* provide ministerial direction for ski area planning and management that applies to all national park ski areas. In accordance with these guidelines, Parks Canada's primary goal for the management of ski areas is to achieve long-term use and certainty that:

- Ensure ecological integrity will be maintained or restored;
- Contribute to facilitating memorable national park visitor experiences and education opportunities; and
- Provide ski area operators with clear parameters for business planning in support of an economically healthy operation.

(Ski Area Management Guidelines, Minister of Environment, 2006, page 1)

The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* provide overarching direction on matters such as:

- The approach and principles to ski area planning and management;
- The scope of permissible ski area land use and development;
- Conditions that apply to the development of buildings and infrastructure;
- Ecological management; and



- The development of ski area specific *Site Guidelines* and Long-Range Plans.

While the provisions of the *Ski Area Management Guidelines* apply to all ski areas, they also permit Parks Canada to consider exceptions to the guidelines if there are associated substantial environmental gains (*Ski Area Management Guidelines 2006*). Potential exceptions and associated substantial environmental gains are considered in the development of Ski Area *Site Guidelines* and implemented through Long-Range Plans. The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* provide the main direction for ski area planning and may be referred to directly or generally throughout this document.

As the *Ski Area Management Guidelines* (attached as Appendix One) provide the overarching direction for the ski area planning process, ski area proposals, projects or initiatives, whether mentioned in Site Guidelines or not, must be consistent with the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*.

Ski area specific Site Guidelines are prepared by Parks Canada in consultation with a ski area and flow from the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*. They are developed prior to Long-Range Plans being completed by a ski area or other significant development proposals are considered. The primary focus of a ski area's *Site Guidelines* is to identify parameters and conditions that guide potential future development, establish limits to growth and provide certainty regarding the types of projects and use that may be considered in the preparation of Long-Range Plans. Consistent with the Ski Area Management Guidelines, a period of public consultation on a ski area's draft Site Guidelines and Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. Once approved, *Site Guidelines* direct the scope of Long-Range Plans and other development and use at the ski area for the foreseeable future (*Ski Area Management Guidelines 2006*). Site Guidelines do not constitute any level of development approval for ski area proposals or projects.

Following approval of a ski area's *Site Guidelines*, ski areas prepare a Long-Range Plan describing one or more proposed projects or changes in use that will be implemented by the ski area during a specific time frame of their choosing. Additional Long-Range Plans may be brought forward, and the processes repeated, until the ski area reaches maximum build-out as defined by the permanent, negotiated growth limits within the *Site Guidelines*. Once approved, implementation of specific projects in a Long-Range Plan are guided by Parks Canada's standard permitting processes. Proposals brought forward by a ski area in a Long-Range Plan, along with the associated Environmental Impact Analysis, need to clearly demonstrate consistency with a ski area's approved Site Guidelines and that the parameters, conditions and other requirements can be met. Each proposed Long-Range Plan is subject to a period of public consultation and an Environmental Impact Analysis.

1.2 Development of the Lake Louise Site Guidelines for Development and Use

The *Lake Louise Site Guidelines for Development and Use (Site Guidelines)* are a Parks Canada policy document drafted in collaboration and negotiation with the Lake Louise Ski Area as a leaseholder and business operator. The development of the *Site Guidelines* is based on an analysis of key strategic considerations focused primarily on sustainable business, visitor experience, and resource protection and restoration.



A Core Concept addresses key strategic considerations and serves as the basis for ski area planning and development including adjustments to the leasehold, capacity and growth limits, ecological management strategies and parameters and heritage tourism direction. General guidelines provide parameters and conditions for typical ski area development and use activities while Area Concepts provide a greater level of clarity and detail on the scope of potential use and activity that may be considered for different zones of the ski area.

The development of the *Lake Louise Ski Site Guidelines for Development and Use (Site Guidelines)* is informed by concurrent environmental analysis. The draft *Site Guidelines* to be used for the public participation process is subject to a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment. Final decisions on the draft *Site Guidelines* are informed by and made following the completion of an independent peer review and the public participation process.

The *Lake Louise Ski Area Site Guidelines for Development and Use* were prepared by Parks Canada in collaboration with the ski area. *The Strategic Environmental Assessment* was prepared by Parks Canada and reviewed by two independent scientific peers.

To seek public and stakeholder views on a draft of the *Site Guidelines* and the *Strategic Environmental Assessment*, Parks Canada invited and considered input from a broad range of organizations and individuals interested in the future of the Lake Louise Ski Area and Banff National Park. Public open houses in Calgary, Banff and Lake Louise attracted 200 people. Summary documents were made available at the open houses and were also posted with full versions of the *Site Guidelines* and the *Strategic Environmental Assessment* on the Parks Canada website to facilitate broader public comment.

The *Lake Louise Ski Area Site Guidelines* and *Strategic Environmental Assessment* elicited strong public comment with close to 1,200 comments being received. Public views concerning the draft *Site Guidelines* were widely divergent. Those who supported the proposal considered them well balanced, addressing visitor experience, education and ecological integrity in an integrated manner. Those not in support were primarily concerned about declared wilderness zoning changes, potential further development, and substantial environmental gains concepts. Comments related to the *Strategic Environmental Assessment* mainly concerned impacts on mountain goat, grizzly bears, water use, whitebark pine, clarity around cumulative effects and expansion of summer hours.

Parks Canada has carefully considered these views in finalizing the *Site Guidelines* and the *Strategic Environmental Assessment* to ensure that they reflect the principles and direction of the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*.

A Parks Canada report entitled *What We Heard* summarizes the public comments received during the three week engagement period for the *Lake Louise Site Guidelines* and the *Strategic Environmental Assessment*. It is available on the Banff National Park website.



Future consultation opportunities will be provided to stakeholders and the general public during the Long-Range planning process and the associated application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

2 Strategic Considerations

Lake Louise is the largest ski area in Canada's national parks and currently the third largest in Canada covering over 2,000 ha of diverse valley to mountaintop terrain. It is located immediately east of the Village of Lake Louise in central Banff National Park (see Map 1). The ski area spans the slopes of three mountain ridges and two key watersheds, is home to several species at risk, lies across a key wildlife corridor and is adjacent to a key grizzly bear core habitat area. As one of few areas zoned for outdoor recreation development in the park management plan, the ski area plays a significant role in the mountain park's economy and provides winter and summer recreational and educational activities that attract visitors from around the globe. The convergence of ecological, economic and visitor experience factors creates a complex set of strategic considerations.

2.1 Sustainable Business Considerations

The downhill ski industry has evolved considerably since the *1981 Lake Louise Ski Area Development Plan*. Some key developments since its release serve to illustrate the dynamic nature of the industry including:

- Increased reliance, improved technology and capacity of snowmaking systems;
- Increased speed and capacity of ski lifts;
- The advent of snowboarding as an alternative to skiing;
- Design and use of constructed features such as half pipes and terrain parks for skiing and snowboarding;
- Increase in the number and types of competitive ski and snowboard events;
- Advances in ski, snowboard and associated gear technology that make previously un-skiable terrain accessible to more skiers and snowboarders;
- Increasing costs related to infrastructure development, capital and ongoing operations of lifts and grooming equipment as ski areas continually upgrade to remain competitive and relevant to skiers and snowboarders; and
- Increasing summer use at ski areas to increase revenue and support winter operations by making use of winter lifts to support a variety of recreational activities.

These examples illustrate the dynamic nature of the ski industry as it strives to adjust to skier demands, trends, and new technology in a competitive winter market. How the industry will continue to evolve will be difficult to predict with any certainty. However, recent and foreseeable



trends are likely to have important implications for Lake Louise and other mountain park ski areas.

Skier visits for Canada have increased from 17 to 19 million (11.5 per cent) for the years 1995 to 2011 (*Canada West Ski Areas Association 2012*). Ski resorts in all countries worldwide are primarily visited by domestic skiers, with over half the visits occurring on weekends pointing to the importance of the domestic market (*SkiStar, The Global Alpine Market*). International skier visit to western Canada have declined in the past few years. International skier visits as a share of total Canadian skier visits declined from 25 per cent in 2001-02 to 11 percent in 2012-13. (Canadian Ski Council, Canada West Ski Area Association).

Recently, the North American ski industry has shown positive growth trending upwards during the last three years. The Kottke End of Season Report showed a 5.3 per cent increase in total North American skier visits in 2013/14 over the previous year, making this the best season for the continent in 36 years.

There are a variety of general considerations in the current North American ski industry. Baby boomers represent the majority of the market, and while they are exiting the market, they are not necessarily being replaced by future generations with the same enthusiasm for skiing. The general interests of today's generation for skiing-related activities and interests does not align with the older generations. Fueled by technological advances in ski and snowboard design, ski areas now continually evolving to meet customer demands for terrain parks, half-pipes, more challenging terrain, better grooming and better lifts. Ski areas that once held only traditional alpine ski events now play host to a variety of competitions reflecting their clients' interests in freestyle skiing and boarding, ski cross, mountain free ride, half-pipe and other events.

At the same time, better equipment is fuelling a dramatic rise in the popularity of backcountry skiing and snowboarding. Skiers¹ increasingly access park backcountry areas outside the ski area's lease from existing lifts seeking powder and untracked snow conditions. These areas are unmanaged for avalanches and other risks. Many of these skiers/boarders have little wilderness travel experience, creating public safety risks.

Ski areas now offer a variety of diversified winter and summer activities beyond what was offered a few years ago to maintain market share and to ensure a sustainable business.

To be sustainable, ski areas generally need to modernize their facilities, diversify their operations, better match their skiing product with skier expectations, provide improvements specifically aimed at making them more attractive to the intermediate and beginner skier/boarder and broaden year-round appeal. Parks Canada is supportive of such changes if they can be achieved in a manner that contributes to ecological integrity and visitor experience and reinforce the ski area's association with and location in a national park.

¹ The terms 'skiers', 'snow riders' and 'riders' used throughout this document refers to skiers and snowboarders.



Over the last 20 years the Calgary and Alberta populations have increased dramatically, and it is expected that this trend will continue. Calgary has grown from 740,000 to 1.2 million (38 per cent) in the last two decades. The 2014 population of Alberta is 4.1 million (*Calgary Civic Census*). Despite increased regional population, skier visits to Alberta areas have fluctuated between 2.3 and 2.6 million with an average of 2.4 million visits since 2004/05 (*Canadian Ski Council, 2011*).

Climate change is having an impact on regional ski areas, including Lake Louise. In general, warming temperatures, reduced summer precipitation volumes and higher elevation freezing temperatures are likely to challenge ski areas with conditions that are not favourable to snowmaking, that limit water availability and that shorten ski seasons. A general assumption is that ski areas similar to Lake Louise that are higher in elevation and located near the continental divide may be better positioned to adapt to these changes than lower elevation ski areas. As such, ski areas such as Lake Louise may, over time, remain a reliable ski destination. Climate changes and regional population growth may result in increased demand at Lake Louise.

Several factors will be important to consider with respect to on-going ski area sustainability in the foreseeable future:

- Effective and efficient snowmaking will be necessary to address changes in freezing and precipitation conditions and to make efficient use of limited water resources;
- Aside from snowmaking, effective and efficient water supply and recycling systems will be important to address limited water resources;
- Longer summers and shorter winters may impact seasonal visitation redirecting some business to summer and summer shoulder seasons;
- The evolution of skiing over the past 30 years indicates a need to maintain flexibility to react to changing markets, technologies, and visitor expectations; and
- It is reasonable to expect that visitor demand at the Lake Louise Ski Area will increase over time because of regional population growth, increasing domestic and international skier visits and increasing regional competitiveness of ski area due to warming climate conditions.

2.1.1 Desired Outcomes and Priorities – Sustainable Business Considerations

- The Lake Louise Ski Area continues to be an economically viable provider of winter and summer recreation and visitation opportunities;
- Climate change and water use scenarios are a necessary component to be planned for with future proposals for Lake Louise Ski Area development, use and infrastructure planning;
- Lake Louise Ski Area has reasonable flexibility to react and adapt to changing business and market conditions; and



Map 1. Lake Louise Regional Map





- Reasonable provision is afforded to increase ski area capacity in response to increases in demand.

2.2 Key Visitor Experience Considerations

The Lake Louise Ski Area is typically thought of as a winter business, but summer sightseeing and natural heritage interpretation have been part of summer visitor activities at the ski area since the 1950's when Lake Louise introduced a summer 'sedan lift' or gondola. The ski area is zoned for outdoor recreation use and as such it is reasonable to consider winter and summer visitor experience opportunities and associated development in accordance with the *Ski Area Management Guidelines* and *Banff National Park Management Plan* direction.

While it is expected that the focus of winter business will continue to be snow riding activities (skiing and snowboarding) the *Ski Area Management Guidelines* make allowance for the consideration of new winter educational and recreational opportunities provided that they are consistent with park management plan direction and maintain an authentic Canadian mountain national park experience, and provide winter educational opportunities that focus on the heritage values of the park and world heritage sites.

Throughout the ski industry, common standards are used to calculate ski area carrying capacity and resort balance for various elements such as lift capacity, commercial space, parking and ski terrain. Key existing challenges at the Lake Louise Ski Area include a demand for ski terrain appropriate for beginner and lower intermediate skiers, poor traffic flow to and around the base area, lack of adequate food and beverage services and seating at peak times, available parking, and comfortable and safe skier circulation around the mountain.

While the Lake Louise Ski Area has a current approved capacity of 6,000 skiers a day, the resort attracts crowds in excess of 7,000 on busy days, resulting in skier congestion that puts pressure on existing commercial space. Lake Louise currently has 1.2 m² of commercial space per person. The ski industry standard is 1 to 1.5 m² of space per person, depending on local conditions. For an area like Lake Louise, without ski-in ski-out accommodation, a higher ratio of 1.5 m² is recommended to ensure adequate storage space, change rooms, restrooms and food and beverage services.

Trends in the snow riding industry may create demand for different features such as constructed terrain parks or more natural conditions given the recent interest in sidecountry terrain access. While a ski area's focus in the past was only skiing, today there are a variety of other winter activities offered such as tubing, skating, snowshoeing and ice climbing.

Summer is the time of greatest visitor use in Banff National Park. The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* are clear that the focus of summer use at national park ski areas is on learning about the park and its world heritage site status. Existing facilities at the ski area offer a unique educational opportunity to reach summer visitors using lifts and lodges that provide access to alpine locations that would otherwise remain inaccessible to the majority of visitors.

Ski area development can be visible from other important visitor use areas such as Lake Louise, the Boulder Pass area, Paradise Valley and Moraine Lake Road and from the Village of Lake



Louise. This is particularly true for development on ridgelines or skylines that are interrupted by lifts and buildings and for linear features such as cut lines, roads or fence lines. The Temple Road running through the ski area leasehold is the main access route for backcountry visitors starting their outing at the Fish Creek Trailhead to the Hidden Lake and Skoki areas and beyond. Ski area development and operational use of the roadway has the potential to impact the experience of these visitors seeking a wilderness experience.

2.2.1 Desired Outcomes and Priorities - Visitor Experience

- Develop and maintain authentic mountain national park experiences for all visitors in all seasons at the ski area;
- Ensure a balance of ski area components in order to minimize congestion and crowding and maximize memorable visitor experience and connection;
- Strengthen the connection of ski area winter and summer visitors to the Banff National Park and World Heritage Site through enhanced heritage interpretation, learning and experiential opportunities with learning opportunities about notable ecological and cultural aspects of the ski area; and
- Maintain, and where feasible, restore visual and natural viewsapes and minimize other sensory disturbance such as noise and vehicle traffic for on- and off-mountain visitors.

2.3 Key Ecological Protection Considerations

Ski area use and development can be associated with various environmental impacts that are considered most appropriately at the planning and implementation stages for specific projects. The *Lake Louise Site Guidelines* are the appropriate level to identify and begin to address strategic level environmental considerations; those that have implications for natural resource conservation, restoration and ecological integrity at the regional and local landscape levels. Strategic considerations important to the development of ski area Site Guidelines can be considered with respect to water and aquatic ecosystem resources, vegetation composition, structure and function and wildlife habitat. Protecting and restoring species at risk within each of these strategic areas of consideration is an important focus for the mountain national parks, one that has evolved over the last few years and can be expected to evolve well into the future.

Vegetation Composition, Structure and Function

Key strategic considerations related to vegetation include integration with park-wide fire and disease management sensitive species and vegetation communities and Whitebark pine, which is listed as endangered under the *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*.

Ski area development and use must be integrated with local park fire management in order to ensure public safety and protection of ski area infrastructure from wildfire. There are also potential opportunities to integrate ski area vegetation management such as run clearing and glading with park vegetation and fire management strategies in ways that contribute to ecological objectives including management of prescribed fire and mountain pine beetle.



Rare and sensitive vegetation occurs in various locations throughout the ski area often associated with alpine and wet habitat near streams, ponds and other watercourses and areas of wet and saturated soils. Whitebark pine occurs in a relatively restricted elevation band on certain slopes within the ski area lease. SARA protection for Whitebark pine currently applies to individual trees at the ski area. Similar to fire management there is potential to develop and manage in and around Whitebark pine at the ski area in ways that may contribute to species protection and recovery.

Water and Aquatic Ecosystems

Key strategic considerations related to water and aquatic ecosystems include protection and management of water quality, maintaining natural surface flow regimes, and protection and restoration of Westslope cutthroat and Bull trout fish habitat in the Pipestone River and Corral Creek.

Water quality may be affected by ski area vegetation management, construction or operations which have the potential to increase sedimentation and water temperatures introduce deleterious substances such as hydrocarbons or salt, and elevated levels of nutrient loading or biological waste. Corral Creek and the Pipestone River are used as the sources of both potable and snowmaking water for the ski area. As discussed earlier, under sustainable business considerations, climate change scenarios predict there may be less surface water availability at times when the ski area may need the most water for snowmaking.

Potential changes to water quality and surface flow regimes interact with riparian and aquatic vegetation, fish and wildlife species and communities. Harlequin ducks are found on the Pipestone River and lower Corral Creek. The western toad, listed as a species of 'Special Concern' under SARA, is found within the ski area and requires standing water at certain times of year. Bull trout are present in the Pipestone River and are provincially listed as a threatened species. Westslope cutthroat trout are listed as a "threatened" species under SARA and are present in Corral Creek. Protection of individuals and restoration of critical habitat for both fish species is likely to have implications for ski area vegetation management, development location and design and water withdrawal and treatment systems.

Wildlife Habitat

Key strategic considerations related to wildlife and wildlife habitat include:

- Habitat change and loss;
- Disturbance, displacement and habituation;
- Altered predatory-prey relationships; and
- Wildlife movement.

Ski area development and use has implications for wildlife species and wildlife habitat on and off the ski area. Key wildlife species of concern from a strategic perspective include grizzly bear, wolverine, mountain caribou and mountain goat. The Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor, a multi-



species corridor that is used by wildlife to move along the north side of the Bow Valley parallel with the river, traverses the front side of the ski area on Mount Whitehorn. While some ski area activities may be managed to contribute at least partially to broad wildlife objectives, the sheer size and extent of the ski area and the magnitude of human use, have potential cumulative effects that may extend beyond ski area boundaries. While minimizing impacts to all wildlife species is an important consideration for ski area planning and assessment, maintaining ecological function on a broader scale in support of these key sensitive wildlife species is an important aspect of maintaining ecological integrity and meeting SARA legal obligations.

2.3.1 Desired Outcomes and Priorities – Ecological Integrity

- Ensure that land use decisions contribute to ecological integrity goals including fire and vegetation management, wildlife movement, grizzly bear habitat security and species at risk protection and recovery;
- Conserve and restore terrestrial and aquatic habitat conditions for sensitive species including Whitebark pine, grizzly bear, wolverine, mountain goat, Westslope cutthroat trout, Bull trout and mountain caribou;
- Ensure habitat security by maintaining or reducing the potential for grizzly bear/human conflict, displacement and habituation;
- Maintain or improve the effectiveness of the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor;
- Manage vegetation to reflect natural composition, diversity and patterns, and maintain function of sensitive soil-vegetation complexes, including rare plants, wet soils and alpine plant communities; and
- Demonstrate leadership in environmental management, stewardship, monitoring and best practices.

2.4 Key Cultural Resource Considerations

There are no known important archaeological, paleontological, historic or other cultural resources within or adjacent to the Lake Louise Ski Area leasehold. It is expected that potential impacts to currently unknown cultural or historic resources will be addressed as part of best management practices, the Long-Range Plan process, and associated environmental impact analyses.

Skoki Ski Lodge National Historic Site is accessed from the ski area along the Temple Road and Skoki backcountry trail. While the lodge is operated by the Lake Louise Ski Area it lies in an adjacent valley and operates under a separate management plan. Ski area development and use activities are not anticipated to interact with the cultural or historic values of Skoki Ski Lodge. As an operation independent of the ski area management and planning, Skoki Ski Lodge National Historic Site is not considered within the scope of the *Site Guidelines*.

Given that there are no known significant cultural resources, no potential for direct impact to Skoki Ski Lodge and other planning and assessment processes are in place to identify and



evaluate future issues, cultural and historic resources are not considered further as part of the *Site Guidelines*.

3 Ski Area Development and Management Direction

3.1 Ski Area Core Concept

The Core Concept for the ski area has been developed to integrate the goals and objectives for sustainable business, visitor experience and ecosystem integrity. The Core Concept establishes a long-term vision for the ski area that incorporates broad based approaches in three key categories: level of visitor use and the kind of experiences offered, environmental stewardship and protection, and ski area infrastructure development.

As one of few areas zoned for outdoor recreation in the mountain parks, the Lake Louise Ski Area serves Parks Canada visitors as a world-class national park winter and summer visitor destination, carrying on a tradition of outdoor adventure and educational opportunities unique to the wild, natural environment of Banff National Park.

For winter visitors, the ski area provides some of the best snow riding opportunities in the Rockies, offering a range of challenges from introductory winter activities at the base of the mountain to big-bowl riding experiences on the edge of the wild of Banff National Park normally only accessible to backcountry skiers. Combined with natural snow and terrain conditions, spectacular alpine and wilderness scenery, uncrowded runs, and patrolled skiing opportunities in terrain normally only accessed by backcountry skiers differentiate Lake Louise from other North American ski destinations.

For summer visitors, the ski area provides opportunities to experience and celebrate authentic mountain culture through programs and activities that engage and connect them to the rich history and character of the mountain national parks.

Summer interpretive guiding and environmental education opportunities stage at the base area, and focus on mountain wildlife and national park environments. Higher up on the mountain unique 'view from the edge' hiking experiences with spectacular scenery are centered around designated trails and a lodge located near the upper alpine ridge of Whitehorn Mountain.

Infrastructure at the ski area provides convenient, comfortable and safe experiences for visitors similar to other premier tourism destinations. The character of development at Lake Louise reflects a common architectural and design theme that reflects local mountain tradition, culture and design, and connects visitors to the spectacular natural environment of Banff National Park. Buildings, infrastructure and other artificial or constructed features are unobtrusive and blend into the natural environment utilizing local natural materials wherever possible. Commercial and common area spaces are designed and sized so visitors feel comfortable and uncrowded, and provide an experience that connects visitors with the stunning outdoor environment.

Reflecting its iconic location in Banff National Park, environmental stewardship and protection is a way of doing business that is pervasive throughout all aspects of the Lake Louise Ski Area operation. Ski area development and operations are conducted based on exemplary best



management practices, utilize “green” design and maximize resource efficiency. Ski area development and operational decisions actively support national park environmental initiatives and management, contributing to regional and park-wide ecosystem management objectives.

3.2 Environmental Gains and Exceptions

The *Ski Area Management Guidelines (2006)* recognize that there may be circumstances where the stringent application of the guidelines to specific ski area circumstances may not be the best way to achieve the goals of memorable visitor experiences, ecological protection and sustainable business. The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* allow Parks Canada to consider exceptions to the guidelines with respect to facilities, parking, terrain modification and the developed area in exchange for substantial environmental gains. Exceptions may not be considered with respect to guidelines concerning on-hill accommodation, growth limits, water permits or infrastructure requirements (*Ski Area Management Guidelines 2006, page 5 and 6*).

The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* define a substantial environmental gain as “a positive change in key ecological conditions (wildlife movement and habitat, wildlife mortality, sensitive species/areas and aquatic ecosystems) that leads to the restoration or the long-term certainty of maintaining ecological integrity.” The *Guidelines* further state that “a leasehold reduction or reconfiguration that results in better protection of sensitive areas in exchange for development in less sensitive areas” may be considered to be a change that leads to desired long-term certainty.

The *Site Guidelines* for the Lake Louise Ski Area include a suite of gains and exceptions developed in collaboration with the ski area. The gains and exceptions are intended to maximize the potential to achieve the desired outcomes of the strategic considerations and the key priorities of a sustainable business, outstanding visitor experience and ecological protection.

3.2.1 Substantial Environmental Gains

Parks Canada considers that four key proposals have the potential to result in the long-term certainty of maintaining ecological integrity and can be considered to be substantial environmental gains consistent with the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*:

- Permanent legislated return of Purple and Wolverine bowls to the protected zones of Banff National Park;
- Permanent legislated return of lands currently within the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor to the protected zones of the park or to limited and prescribed operational uses regulated by a Licence of Occupation;
- Relocation of the summer season hiking, sightseeing and interpretive programs to the upper ridges of Whitehorn Mountain to mitigate the impacts to wildlife associated with the current summer use program located at mid-mountain; and
- Re-configuration of water supply systems, including the development of off-stream storage reservoirs, to provide protection for aquatic systems and sensitive species.



Purple and Wolverine Bowls

Purple and Wolverine Bowls have long been identified by Parks Canada as sensitive, pristine alpine wildlife habitat important to grizzly bear, wolverine, mountain goat and other wildlife. Historically, Purple and Wolverine Bowls were more regularly visited by mountain goats, which took advantage of a seasonal mineral lick. Wolverine Valley and Purple Bowl serve as a wildlife corridor between the Baker Creek and Skoki Valley areas for grizzly bear and mountain goat. Local bighorn sheep populations may winter on the south Baker Creek side slopes of Purple Peak. The valley bottoms of these bowls contain soil and vegetation complexes that hold considerable snowmelt and precipitation groundwater, regulating flows to critical fish habitat in Corral Creek throughout the summer season. Parks Canada has long considered that development of these areas would result in adverse impacts to wildlife and stream flow regimes in the Corral Creek watershed.

Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor Lands

Considerable undeveloped areas of the ski area leasehold lie at lower elevations and are traversed by the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor. The return of some of these lands to the protected areas of the park will provide long-term certainty that wildlife movement through these areas will not be impaired by potential future use or development. Land to be returned to the protected zones of the park include the Lower Front Side, Ford Hill and Olympic West areas. The Lower Front Side and Ford Hill Lands will significantly add to a continuous band of protection for the wildlife corridor. The portion of the lease between the Trans-Canada Highway and the Whitehorn Road, including the old gondola base, will be removed from the leasehold. The area immediately around the old gondola base will be converted to a Licence of Occupation in support of limited ski area operations, including a reservoir, water and utility supply to the main ski area.

Summer Use Relocation

Relocation of the Lake Louise Ski Area summer season hiking, sightseeing and interpretive programs to the upper ridges of Whitehorn Mountain will move summer visitors away from the middle of prime summer season grizzly bear habitat to higher ski area elevations less used by bears. This will reduce the disturbance, displacement and habituation of grizzly bears and decrease the potential for human/bear encounters. Site seeing/viewing opportunities at the top of the mountain will be improved and wildlife viewing will continue from the safety of the overhead Grizzly Gondola lift.

Water Supply Systems

Westslope cutthroat trout (a SARA threatened species) and Bull trout (a species of concern) are found in the Pipestone River and Corral Creek. The current snowmaking and potable water supply system withdraws water directly from these watercourses. For snowmaking, the greatest water need is early in the fall which coincides with late-season, low flow river and creek conditions. The elimination of direct, on-demand surface water withdrawal from Corral Creek and the Pipestone River is a key aspect of this environmental gain. Conservation and efficiency measures, the development of alternative water sources, and the use of storage reservoirs that



can be trickle charged, will help secure the necessary surface flows to support fish habitat during low-flow times of the year.

3.2.2 Exceptions to the Ski Area Management Guidelines

Permanent legislated protection for Purple and Wolverine Bowls and the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor, coupled with improved summer grizzly bear habitat security and stream flow conditions, make it possible to consider a suite of exceptions to the Ski Area Management Guidelines. Exceptions considered include:

- Development of new ski terrain outside the current lease in the West Bowl (173 ha) and Hidden Bowl (183 ha) areas. These areas will be governed by a winter only Licence of Occupation;
- Development of new ski terrain inside the current lease but outside the current developed area at Richardson's Ridge (81 ha) and in the West Juniper (30 ha) area inside the current lease;
- Development of a new day lodge in the vicinity of the Grizzly Gondola top terminal to support relocated summer use operations; and
- Significant terrain modification in key locations to improve skier safety and circulation.

West Bowl Sidecountry

Across North America, many mountain ski areas provide easy access to out-of-bounds skiing and boarding. With ongoing advances in equipment technology, increasing numbers of people can ski challenging terrain and are seeking a powder adventure experience. Some ski areas in North America have responded to this trend by providing controlled sidecountry terrain. They work closely with their snow safety teams and adjacent land managers to provide this skier experience in a safe and responsible manner.

At the Lake Louise Ski Area, skiers currently use the Summit Platter lift to ski the West Bowl area. West Bowl is an off lease, out-of-bounds open bowl that funnels skiers through a cliff band with narrow steep chutes and tight trees to a narrow treed traverse back to the lower in-bounds Juniper Area.

While the level of West Bowl use is dependent on snow conditions, it is generally accepted use has been increasing. As West Bowl is not within the ski area's current boundaries, it is not avalanche controlled and is not ski patrolled. Ski area professional patrollers will access West Bowl to respond to reported injuries or missing skiers. Parks Canada Visitor Safety staff respond to avalanche and visitor safety incidents as required.

As an exception to the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*, Parks Canada will issue the ski area a licence of occupation for West Bowl to provide more adventurous and higher-skilled skiers with a controlled sidecountry experience in complex terrain. There will be no lifts in West Bowl, no future cut runs and no grooming in this area. The ski area will conduct avalanche control,



provide safety patrols and develop an egress trail sufficient for advanced skiers below the cliff band back to the Juniper area. Skiers using West Bowl should be properly trained and equipped for travel in avalanche terrain, and be prepared to spend time outdoors in case of an accident. It is anticipated that this will limit the number of skiers in West Bowl to advanced skiers and as intended will ensure no future demand for cut runs, lifts, grooming or modification of the cliff bands.

Ski area avalanche control and development of a formal egress trail will formalize existing sidecountry use in West Bowl and along the northwest ridge of Whitehorn Mountain. This will improve skier safety and provide an enhanced opportunity for adventure skiers, while minimizing Parks Canada and ski area public safety responses related to out-of-bounds unmonitored skiing. West Bowl terrain lies adjacent to critical caribou habitat and contains Whitebark pine, a species at risk. However, fully regulated limits to allowable development and use in West Bowl minimizes the potential for significant ecological impacts (for details see West Bowl Area Concept Section 5.5).

Hidden Bowl Backcountry Lift and Hut

This winter-use-only exception provides the opportunity to access Hidden Bowl, under a Licence of Occupation, from a lift on the front (west) side of Richardson's Ridge. Consideration is also provided for a return lift in Hidden Bowl, a warming hut and a winter-only access/egress trail returning to the main ski area above Temple Lodge. Hidden Bowl development will introduce guests to intermediate and advanced terrain and provide an alternative to the expert terrain of the Whitehorn Back Bowls. (For details see Hidden Bowl Area Concept Section 5.6.)

Richardson's Ridge

The Richardson's Ridge area is within the current ski area lease, but outside its current developed area boundary. The Richardson's Ridge exception considers a ski lift, ski runs and glading development on the south end of Richardson's Ridge within the lease. Development of this terrain would provide beginner to upper-intermediate ski terrain that is currently lacking on the backside of the ski area. This exception also includes redevelopment of a previously lifted area known as Prunepickers on the opposite side of Corral Creek above Temple Lodge to provide safe and convenient skier access back to the Richardson's Ridge lift base from the lodge. Some modest presence of Whitebark pine, drainage into the Corral Creek watershed and crossing of Corral Creek from the Prunepickers area are environmental concerns that are expected to be effectively mitigated through best management practices and management standards for Species at Risk (for details see Temple Area Concept Section 5.4).

West Juniper Lift and Runs

The West Juniper area is within the current ski area lease but outside its current developed area boundary. The West Juniper exception allows for the consideration of lifts and new runs to provide beginner and lower-intermediate ski terrain adjacent to and returning to the ski area base. This development would modify forest cover on the north end of the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor. However, maintaining appropriate run widths and distances between runs is expected



to maintain wildlife habitat and movement effectiveness (for details see Whitehorn Front Side Area Concept Section 5.2).

New Eagle Ridge Shoulder Lodge

The new Eagle Ridge Shoulder Lodge, would be an exception and located within the current lease and developed area in the vicinity of the top terminal of the existing Grizzly Gondola on Whitehorn Mountain. The Eagle Ridge Shoulder Lodge would be used to replace summer use of the Whitehorn Lodge, which currently serves as a mid-mountain visitor centre in the summer. While relocating summer use to the higher elevations of Whitehorn Mountain is considered an environmental gain, the move precludes the continued use of the Whitehorn Lodge in the summer. Visual impacts, close proximity of Whitebark pine and maintaining wildlife movement across the shoulder in this area are key considerations for design and specific location of this lodge (for details see Whitehorn Front Side Area Concept Section 5.2).

Terrain Modification

The *Lake Louise Site Guidelines for Development and Use* will consider proposals for significant terrain modification within the revised ski area leasehold, below treeline, existing skiways and only where considered necessary for skier safety (such as connecting areas of beginner and intermediate terrain), or environmental protection (for details see specific Area Concepts in Section 5). A significant environmental gain is required for this exception to the terrain modification requirements of the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*.

3.3 Lease and Licences of Occupation

In order to implement the suite of gains and exceptions, reconfiguration of the ski area's current lease boundary is necessary. A large portion of land will be permanently removed from the current ski area lease while two areas outside the current lease will be added under a legally binding Licence of Occupation to support winter-only program use. Other small areas for operational support and avalanche control will also require Licences of Occupation. These changes will require legal surveys to be completed by the Lake Louise Ski Area which will result in new lease and Licence of Occupation agreements with Parks Canada and the ski area. The land being returned to the park will become designated wilderness and the ski area boundary changes will eventually be enshrined under Schedule 5 of the *Canada National Parks Act*.

With this boundary reconfiguration, the revised total area of the ski area's operation will be substantially smaller than the existing lease. However, the new visitor offer features ski terrain that will provide a range of new snow riding opportunities for from beginner to expert and adventure skiers, as well as outstanding sightseeing and wildlife viewing opportunities in the summer.

The suite of substantial environmental gains returns a large, contiguous area of roughly 1,000 Ha of alpine bowl and wildlife corridor habitat from the leasehold to legally protected wilderness designation. Summer use is relocated to less sensitive areas for grizzly bear habitat security on the leasehold, and water supply and aquatic habitat disruption issues are reduced. Although the group of exceptions is not without environmental impacts, the scale and nature of development



and use in other parts of the ski area are defined and controlled so that it can be managed to ensure species at risk are protected and ecological function continues unimpaired.

The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* allow a ski area operator to request a new 42-year lease. New land in exchange for the removal of sensitive areas from the leasehold is to be managed through a Licence of Occupation. The gains and exceptions as described above may be brought forward for implementation as part of a Long-Range Plan. In order to pursue exceptions related to the development and use of new ski terrain in a Long-Range Plan, a new lease and Licence of Occupation must be in place including the return of lands identified as environmental gains back to Parks Canada. A new lease, and new Licences of Occupation as appropriate, must be put in place to formalize these land-related gains and exceptions.

The existing ski area lease encompasses 2,190 ha. Much of the existing lease has not been developed for skiing and lies outside the developed area. Map 2 illustrates the existing ski area lease and existing developed area boundaries.

The proposed reduced lease size and the proposals of the *Site Guidelines* will result in a future developed area boundary that will coincide with the revised lease boundary.

Key elements of the lease and the new Licences of Occupation boundaries and areas are summarized below and are illustrated in Map 3 on page 21 as follows:

Lands removed from existing leasehold as Substantial Environmental Gains:

- Purple and Wolverine Bowls: 537 ha
- Lower Front Side: 315 ha
- Ford Hill: 138 ha
- Oly West: 35 ha
- Total lands removed from current lease: 1,025 ha
- New lease area (not including new Licences of Occupation): 1,165 ha

This significant reduction in lease size and return of sensitive areas to the park creates the long-term certainty of maintaining ecological integrity and is considered the substantial ecological gain that is necessary to consider the land-based exceptions for new ski terrain.



Map 2. Lake Louise Ski Area: Existing Lease and Developed Area





Operational Licences of Occupation within lands removed from leasehold

Of the lands removed from the current lease, Licences of Occupation will be issued to the ski area for areas required for the operational management of the ski area but not required for skiing. The specific allowable uses will be contained in each licence and will be for limited operational purposes including infrastructure and utilities corridors, roadways and avalanche control. These year-round licences will be for a limited area around the old gondola base, for a utilities corridor from the old gondola base to the ski area, and for Temple Road and its Whitehorn Lodge spur road. The linear road Licence of Occupation will include the ski-out and is expected to be approximately 32 ha. The old gondola base will be approximately 7 ha with its associated linear utilities corridor to be determined.

With a new lease boundary there may be a requirement for a limited number of Licences of Occupation to be issued to the Lake Louise Ski Area for avalanche control purposes for trigger zones that were within the old lease boundary. These areas are above Temple Road on Ford Hill, the Larch Chairlift and a portion of the Skoki Trail. Prior to a new lease being issued, these areas will be reviewed and finalized along with stipulations for use by Parks Canada Visitor Safety Specialists working with the Lake Louise Ski Area's snow safety team.

The limited operational and seasonal use of these areas is not anticipated to diminish the substantial environmental gains of removing these areas from the lease and from potential future development.

New Lease and Licences of Occupation Area

The current leased area for the Lake Louise Ski Area is 2,190 ha.

The ski area is returning 1,025 Ha (or approximately 50 per cent) of their current lease to the protected zones of the park. A new ski area lease will be issued encompassing 1,165 ha.

As discussed previously, new ski terrain outside the new lease boundaries may be brought forward in Long-Range Plans for the winter only use of Hidden Bowl and West Bowl.

- West Bowl: 173 ha
- Hidden Bowl: 183 ha
- New ski terrain for winter-only ski terrain under Licence of Occupation: 356 ha

The new lease and two new licences of occupation areas will encompass 1,521 ha.

The net land gain to the park as a result of the ski area surrendering land and Parks Canada issuing new Licences of Occupation for West and Hidden Bowls is 669 ha.

Parks Canada considers that new ski terrain in West and Hidden Bowls can be managed with winter-only Licences of Occupation, consistent with the proposed Area Concepts (see Section 5.5 and 5.6) and the conditions and parameters of the *Site Guidelines* without diminishing the substantial environmental gains in areas returned to the park.



Note: The size of a new ski area lease and Licences of Occupation for West Bowl and Hidden Bowl will be confirmed with the establishment of legal survey boundaries and will be within plus or minus 1 per cent (16 ha) of 1,521 ha.

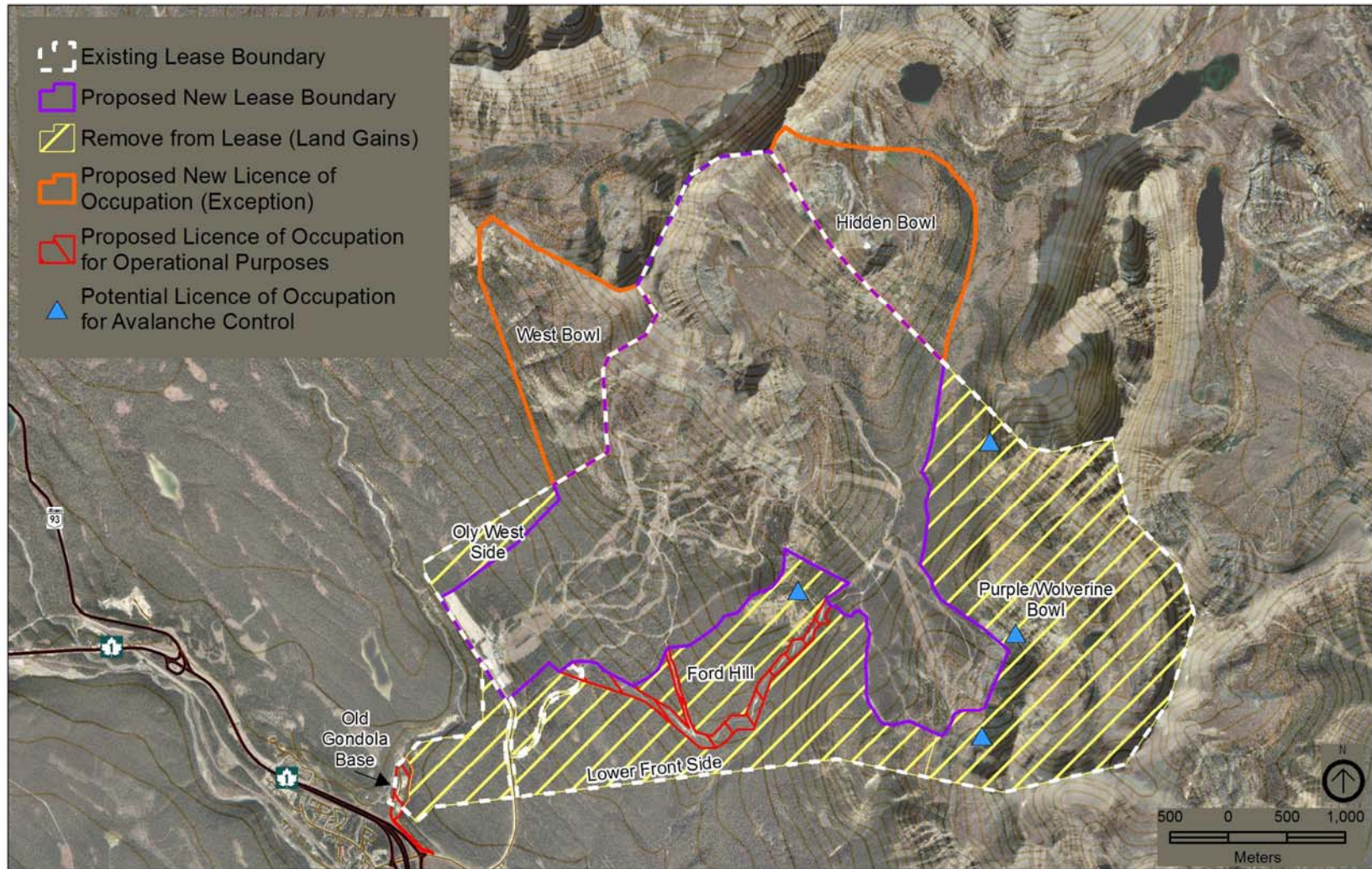
Guidelines and Conditions for new Lease and Licences of Occupation

The following guidelines and conditions will be applied to a new lease and new Licences of Occupation that are required in order to implement land-based environmental gains and exceptions:

- Surveys, real property reports and other related work necessary to issue a new lease and the Licences of Occupation will be completed by the Lake Louise Ski Area and Parks Canada prior to or as part of the first Long-Range Plan. They will be consistent in area with the general limits of Map 3 and any ecological management parameters, conditions or mitigations outlined in the *Site Guidelines* or *Strategic Environmental Assessment*;
- Require the new lease for the ski area and all licences of occupation to be in place prior to permitting any use or development in Hidden Bowl or West Bowl;
- The new lease and Licences of Occupation will be based on the most recent Parks Canada ski area lease and licence of occupation template. They will contain key elements, guidelines and conditions of the *Site Guidelines*;
- Require the new lease for the ski area to be in place prior to permitting any use or development on Richardson's Ridge, West Juniper or Prunepickers areas and any development in the reconfigured lease area that is an exception to the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*;
- Boundaries and areas of the new lease and the Licences of Occupation will be confirmed through legal surveys undertaken by the Lake Louise Ski Area at their expense consistent with Parks Canada survey instructions;
- Adjustments to the leasehold boundaries are expected to be reflected in an amendment to Schedule 5 of the *Canada National Parks Act*. Areas of substantial environmental gain not subject to operational Licences of Occupation will be added to the declared wilderness area of the park through an amendment to the National Parks Wilderness Area Declaration Regulations;
- Projects in an approved Long-Range Plan can proceed once a new lease and the Licences of Occupation are in place. The timing of consideration by Parliament of potential legislative and regulatory amendments related to Schedule 5 and declared wilderness will be determined by the Minister of the Environment; and
- Separate winter and summer annual business licences will continue to be issued. They must be consistent with the new lease and new Licences of Occupation and support implementation of these *Site Guidelines* and future approved Long-Range Plans.



Map 3. Lake Louise Ski Area: Existing Lease, Proposed Lease, Licences of Occupation Boundaries Showing Land Gains & Exceptions





3.4 Design and Use Capacity

3.4.1 Establishing Design Capacity and Growth Limits

As part of the approval of the 1981 *Lake Louise Ski Area Long-Range Development Plan* a capacity of 6,000 skiers per day for the ski area was established. The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* indicate that while the design capacity of ski areas may increase, overall development will be capped through the *Site Guidelines* process. The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* specify that growth limits will be established for ski terrain, the developed area and commercial space (*Ski Area Management Guidelines 2006*). These and other elements of ski area development and infrastructure including out-of-base and total lift capacity and parking may be modified bring them into balance with the established design capacity for the ski area.

Establishing design capacity is the foundation of modern ski area planning. Design capacity is determined by identifying the total amount of ski terrain that could be accessed from a given lift or lift system. Total ski terrain is broken down by skier skill level using industry standards for beginner, intermediate and advanced rider terrain. Skier capacity for each type of terrain is calculated using industry standards based on optimal skier density. Some terrain within a ski area may be purposely targeted for lower density development and use, or may have physical or environmental constraints that further limit or modify potential skier capacity. Other elements such as commercial space and parking capacity required to provide balanced services can then be calculated using standard formulas based on the skier capacity.

As outlined in Section 3.3, Lease and Licences of Occupation, the ski area lease size is decreasing substantially. However, there remains room in the reduced lease area to expand ski terrain and adjust the developed area to provide more varied snow riding opportunities. Referenced as exceptions in Section 3.2.2, proposals for developing new terrain on Richardson's Ridge, the Prunepickers area and Juniper West remain within the boundaries of the reconfigured leasehold. These areas will be included as part of the revised developed area boundary. Other opportunities for infill runs and glading within the reconfigured lease boundary and developed area may be brought forward in Long-Range Plans.

Additional lift service ski capacity is also being added as part of the winter only Licence of Occupation for winter use in Hidden Bowl. Lying outside of the leasehold, Hidden Bowl will not be considered part of the developed area (which is all contained within the lease), but is factored into overall ski area design capacity. West Bowl, also outside of the lease and developed area, adds additional advanced complex ski terrain, but as it is advanced complex terrain with no lifts allowed in the bowl, plays a minor role in establishing design capacity.

Proposed development at the Lake Louise Ski Area submitted in future Long-Range Plans must take into consideration a number of Parks Canada documents, policies and directives including the park management plan. Long-Range Plans need to demonstrate growth at the ski area will remain within the established infrastructure and environmental capacity defined in the Banff, Lake Louise and Field Community Plans and Outlying Commercial Accommodations Guidelines.



Map 4 illustrates the lease boundary reconfiguration and the new ski terrain for Hidden Bowl and West Bowl. These maps provide the basis from which design capacity is calculated.

Guidelines and Conditions for Growth Limits and Design Capacity

The Design Capacity of the ski area was calculated by a third-party industry expert through an analysis of potential ski terrain capabilities, densities and limitations including existing and potential new ski terrain inside the lease and the proposed Licences of Occupation for Hidden Bowl and West Bowl. The analysis also included calculation of growth limits for the amount of commercial space, lift capacity, private vehicle parking and mass transit capacity. Balancing the capacity of facilities such as parking, lifts and lodges is used to determine the number of skiers the ski area is able to serve comfortably.

Based on this third-party analysis, the approved design capacity of the Lake Louise Ski Area is 11,500 skiers a day. Long-Range Plan proposals will be reviewed against the approved design capacity and associated growth limits to achieve resort balance consistent with North American industry standards.

The following growth limits representing the maximum potential build-out for the Lake Louise Ski Area are proposed:

- The Lake Louise Ski Area currently has 551 ha of skiable terrain. These site guidelines represent the possibility for an additional 466 ha of ski terrain which would bring the total skiable terrain growth limit to 1,017 ha including lands within the lease and the Licences of Occupation consistent with Map 4;
- The Lake Louise Ski Area currently has 7,527 m²s of commercial space (6,515 m² commercial and 1,012 m² operational). There will be an additional 9,500 m² of commercial space (commercial and commercial operations support). The total commercial space growth limit is 17,000 m²;
- The Lake Louise Ski Area currently has 1,176 private vehicle parking spaces that are within the ski area standard of 500 metres to the existing base area. There are currently 30 bus parking stalls. *Site Guideline* proposals would allow for an additional 2,080 parking spaces within the industry walking standard and an additional 20 bus parking stalls. The proposed approximate 3,256 existing and new private vehicle spaces and 50 bus parking stalls would be sufficient to meet the design capacity; and
- Current ski area imbalances that affect visitor safety such as issues related to road access, parking and on-hill congestion will be addressed prior to, or as part of proposals that increase actual on-hill capacity.



Map 4. Lake Louise Ski Area: Proposed Lease Reconfiguration and Licences of Occupation Boundary





3.4.2 Managing Infrastructure and Utilities Capacity

Another key aspect of managing ski area development and use capacity is planning related to infrastructure and utilities capacities and limitations. Ski area development or expansion will probably result in the need for increased infrastructure or utilities capacity with impacts on local or regional supply and distribution. For instance, the provincial electrical power grid is the primary power source for the ski area. Wastewater is piped from the ski area to the Lake Louise Wastewater Treatment Plant. Potable water is sourced from Pipestone and Corral Creeks and water is treated by on-site treatment systems. In order to achieve outcomes and priorities for a sustainable business and address cumulative environmental effects it is important that ski area development does not inadvertently or unknowingly trigger the need for infrastructure or utilities capacity expansion beyond its leasehold.

To this end, the *Ski Area Management Guidelines* indicate that infrastructure and utilities such as electrical power, water and wastewater systems must have sufficient capacity and meet environmental standards before expansion of on-hill capacity can take place.

Guidelines and Conditions for Infrastructure and Utilities Capacity

- The Lake Louise Ski Area will prioritize for, and ensure that, effective conservation and efficiencies measures and technologies have been implemented before considering infrastructure or utility capacity increases. This will include addressing potential impacts on community infrastructure and utilities;
- The Lake Louise Ski Area will assess and ensure there are adequate, sustainable water supply and wastewater systems as part of Long-Range Plans and implementation;
- The Lake Louise Ski Area will assess and ensure an adequate electrical energy supply is available as part of Long-Range Plans before projects requiring additional power are implemented. Cumulative effects and impacts of potential growth in the community and the ski area on the electrical supply system will be addressed as part of Long-Range planning and implementation; and
- Alternative technologies such as clean power, green design or retrofitting of existing facilities, micro hydro or other minimal impact technologies may be considered as alternatives to local and regional utilities expansion.

3.4.3 Managing Employee Accommodation Capacity

Potential growth and expansion at the ski area may trigger the need for additional staff and increased housing capacity. Housing for most of the ski area's approximately 500 current winter employees is primarily located in the village of Lake Louise and at the Great Divide Lodge in Lake Louise Ski Area staff housing. Some staff also commute from Field, Banff and Canmore. Limited employee accommodation at the base area and Whitehorn Lodge is needed for on-site,



overnight security needs. The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* require that additional employee accommodation as necessary be located in nearby communities.

Guidelines and Conditions for Employee Accommodation Capacity

- Consider new Lake Louise Ski Area employee accommodation only in the community of Lake Louise. No new on-hill staff accommodation will be allowed unless required for building security reasons. On hill staff accommodation will be limited to a minimal number of ski area staff required to provide overnight security;
- The Lake Louise Ski Area will prepare a Staff Housing Strategy that is consistent with the Lake Louise Community Plan as part of the first Long-Range Plan submission where proposals would increase ski area staffing levels. The Staff Housing Strategy will be updated with subsequent Long-Range Plan submissions; and
- Ski area proposals and projects that will result in an additional staff requirement will only be issued development and occupancy permits under the condition that any existing housing shortfalls are addressed and sufficient housing for the additional staff is in place. Agreements for the use of existing housing from other operators in Lake Louise with a predictable, long-term surplus of approved housing units in the winter months may be considered by Parks Canada as an alternative to the construction of new housing.

3.5 Environmental Planning and Management

Environmental planning and management is an important aspect of ski area development and management. This section of the *Site Guidelines* includes the identification of ecological management parameters that guide environmental review and decision making on project and Long-Range Plan proposals. The *Site Guidelines* also identify the scope of required water, vegetation and transportation management strategies, and environmental management and monitoring systems that are to be included in Long-Range Plans.

3.5.1 Ecological Management Parameters

Because of their relatively large size, location and the nature and intensity of use, ski area development has the potential to adversely impact ecosystem function at local and regional scales. To maintain ecological integrity and protect sensitive species and habitat, Parks Canada identified key valued ecosystem components that require careful management and ecological management parameters to guide project planning, review and assessment.

For more information on the context, ecological parameters and related issues, readers should refer to the *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)* completed for the *Lake Louise Ski Area Site Guidelines for Development and Use*.

Valued ecosystem components identified through the strategic environmental assessment process were included in four key areas of consideration; native vegetation, wildlife, the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor and aquatic ecosystems. Valued components were identified with respect to each of these considerations including:



- Native vegetation
 - Forest structure, Fire disturbance regime, Whitebark pine, alpine bowl habitat.
- Wildlife
 - Grizzly bear, mountain goat, mountain caribou, wolverine and other small carnivores.
- Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor
 - Small mammal habitat fragmentation, wary carnivore movement.
- Aquatic ecosystems
 - Westslope cutthroat and bull trout, surface and subsurface flow regimes, riparian habitat, fens/tarns/ponds, water quality.

The ecological management parameters provide broad conditions that must be considered, designed for and achieved in relation to the valued ecosystem components. All future proposals for expansion, development, changes in use or other proposals consistent with the *Site Guidelines* must demonstrate that ecological parameters for each component will be met. More specific mitigations for valued components such as Species at Risk, in relation to specific elements of the *Site Guidelines* such as potential development near watercourses, are identified in the *Strategic Environmental Assessment*. Mitigations of *the Strategic Environmental Assessment* are considered essential to achieving the Ecological Management Parameters.

Native Vegetation

- Native species and communities dominate vegetation throughout the ski area.
- Plant communities reflect regional and local vegetation structure and diversity.
- Glading and thinning simulate natural vegetation patterns and structure.
- Native vegetation serves as an anchor against soil and terrain erosion.
- Rare and sensitive vegetation communities and terrain features persist.
- Habitat conditions for rare and sensitive species are maintained including critical habitat for *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) listed species.
- Favourable habitat conditions, stand and age distribution of Whitebark pine that sustain the ecological function of the species are enhanced and maintained over time across the expected range at the ski area.
- The composition and structure of vegetation provide habitat for the expected range of native species.



- Vegetation management and facility design support the restoration of fire as a natural process in the local region around the ski area.
- Construction and modifications to vegetation and terrain do not alter rock flow features.
- Construction, terrain modification and vegetation removal avoid disturbance of saturated soils or surficial deposits where mitigation is unlikely to be successful.
- Below tree line, the maximum new run width and widening of existing runs is 50m.
- On either side of runs, a strip of contiguous forest at least as wide as the run remains for all new runs or modifications to runs.
- Forested areas between runs are irregular in shape and of sufficient size to provide effective wildlife habitat and movement cover.

Wildlife

- Winter and summer operational and construction activities do not displace or habituate grizzly bears or other wildlife.
- Changes in development, operations and visitor use result in an overall improvement for grizzly bears, including reduced displacement, habituation or bear-human conflicts.
- Development preserves natural food sources for grizzly bears and does not create non-native sources of food that would attract them.
- Ski area operations and visitor use provide effective low disturbance periods for wildlife that respond to winter and summer seasonal patterns and sensitivities.
- Ski area development and use do not displace ungulates from seasonally important habitat areas or features (seasonal feeding areas for bighorn sheep, elk, deer, caribou, mountain goats), or travel routes essential to the regional population.
- Ski area development does not create habitat or result in human use conditions that alter characteristic predator/prey relationships.

Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor

- The timing of visitor use facilitates predictable and seasonally-based periods and patterns for wildlife to establish and maintain secure patterns of movement and habitat use.
- Daily and seasonal spatial patterns of wildlife use and movement are maintained by avoiding development or visitor activities likely to result in potential displacement of wildlife from established movement routes.



- Wildlife have low disturbance access to and through the wildlife corridor, through a range of natural daylight conditions, including morning and evening daylight periods where feasible according to season, crepuscular and nocturnal periods.
- Wildlife have low disturbance access to and through the wildlife corridor, during sensitive seasons, or times of restricted resources.
- Wildlife have daily, low-vehicle disturbance opportunities to cross the Whitehorn Road.
- Permanent developments, or seasonal or temporary structures, will maintain long-term physical corridor permeability and connectivity for all potentially affected species.
- Ski area use and operation maintain wildlife habitat effectiveness and security outside of the ski area lease and Licences of Occupation.

Aquatic Ecosystems

- Development does not impair the effectiveness of natural surface and subsurface water flows and water course connectivity.
- Minimum in-stream flows and seasonal variability are maintained in support of aquatic fish and wildlife.
- Flooding and seasonal flow patterns maintain riparian vegetation communities.
- Riparian and aquatic habitat structure important to Westslope cutthroat trout, Bull trout or other rare and sensitive aquatic and riparian species is maintained or restored.
- Withdrawal of surface water maintains the natural flow paradigm for riparian, aquatic invertebrate and native fish ecosystems.
- Water quality on, adjacent to, and downstream of the leasehold is maintained.
- Terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem processes function within the natural range of variation.

3.5.2 Water Management Strategy and Snowmaking Infrastructure Plan

Ski area operations involve considerable use of water for the provision of visitor services such as food preparation, potable water, washroom facilities, and for snowmaking operations. Strategies for the development and sustainable use of water are an important consideration for ski area development and management. Potential expansion of ski area design capacity, including ski terrain and commercial space, combined with expected impacts of climate change are expected to intensify the importance of water management at the ski area.



Guidelines and Conditions - Water Management Strategy and Snowmaking Infrastructure Plan

- Complete a Water Management Strategy and Snowmaking Infrastructure Plan as part of any Long-Range Plan that involves growth in design capacity, ski terrain or commercial space demonstrating that potable water and snowmaking needs associated with ski area growth can be supported while sustaining the health of aquatic ecosystems. Parks Canada will prepare the terms of reference for the strategy and plan, taking into consideration the requirements outlined in the *Site Guidelines*.
- To ensure that important water-related issues are addressed in ski area planning, key strategic direction and consideration in any Long-Range Plan Water Management Strategy and Snowmaking Infrastructure Plan will address:
 - Reducing the reliance on direct, on-demand water withdrawal from the Pipestone River;
 - Eliminating direct, on-demand water withdrawal from Corral Creek;
 - Ensuring reliable water supply and sustainability through the use of multiple sources; and
 - Implementing the water and energy efficient technologies with respect to water consumption for potable water, snowmaking systems, grey-water and wastewater systems recycling.
- Water Management Strategies will include consideration for overall water requirements at the ski area including:
 - Potable water sources and treatment;
 - Wastewater treatment and wastewater recycling systems;
 - Snowmaking and snow farming (see also Section 4.7); and
 - Emergency firefighting.
- Water Management Strategies and Snowmaking Infrastructure Plans will include consideration for the protection of natural stream courses, water bodies, wetlands and groundwater in relation to ski area development and operations including:
 - Erosion and sedimentation control;
 - Surface runoff water quality including biological and chemical pollution sources, changes to water chemistry and fish habitat parameters;
 - Protection of, and improvements to, riparian environments including infrastructure improvements, riparian restoration, and operational protective measures; and



- Review and improvement of best management practices.
- Any proposed changes to water withdrawal limits or water management systems will be based on a detailed professional analysis and independent peer review of minimum in-stream flow needs required for Westslope cutthroat trout, Bull trout, and other fish and aquatic species.

3.5.3 Run Improvement and Vegetation Management Strategy

Ski area use and operations involve widespread and continuous modification and management of native vegetation across the ski area. Strategies for the development of ski runs and glades and the on-going maintenance of vegetation are an important consideration for area-wide ski area development and management. The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* require that Long-Range Plans include strategies for run development and vegetation management that address considerations such as sustainable alpine and forest ecosystems, control of non-native species, enhancing wildlife habitat and protecting waterways.

Guidelines and Conditions – Run Improvement and Vegetation Management

Long-Range Plans are to include a Run Improvement and Vegetation Management Strategy as part of every Long-Range Plan regardless of whether or not the Long-Range Plan includes proposals for changes or expansion of ski terrain. Parks Canada will prepare the terms of reference for the strategy taking into consideration the requirements outlined in the *Site Guidelines*.

- In addition to the general requirements of the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*, a Ski Run and Vegetation Management Strategy submitted in a Long-Range Plan will specifically address:
 - Whitebark pine management strategies set out in the Strategic Environmental Assessment;
 - Ski run development and operational maintenance in and around Whitebark pine;
 - Parameters for mimicking natural forest structure and succession for glading project development for different ecological zones and habitat types across the ski area;
 - Protection of ground cover vegetation diversity, wet soils and environments; and
 - Maintaining natural vegetation patterns to preserve natural appearances and views for off-site visitors.

3.5.4 Parking and Transportation Strategy

Careful consideration of parking, transportation and access to the ski area is an important aspect of area wide development and management. Ensuring that ski area parking, vehicle access and visitor access through mass transit proceeds in a strategic way, in balance with



changes to ski area capacity or visitor demand is important as part of achieving sustainable business, visitor experience and ecological outcomes and priorities. For these reasons the *Site Guidelines* require that the ski area develop a Parking and Transportation Strategy for any Long-Range Plan that includes an increase in ski terrain, commercial space or out-of-base lift capacity (see also Section 4.3 Parking and Access).

Guidelines and Conditions

Develop a parking and transportation strategy for any Long-Range Plan that includes an increase in ski terrain, commercial space or out-of-base lift capacity. Parks Canada will prepare the terms of reference for the strategy taking into consideration the requirements outlined in the *Site Guidelines*. The strategy is to address the following:

- Parking requirements consistent with the proposed capacity increase and associated growth limits, design capacity and balancing of resort components;
- Achievement of ecological management parameters;
- Mass transit to be a significant component of visitor access to the ski area. This will include investigating links to existing and potential local and regional transportation services such as the ROAM bus service;
- Any potential parking lot expansion or parking structures outside the existing parking footprint consistent with Section 4.3 Parking and Access;
- Demonstrate the relationship and phasing of any proposed parking lot expansion and mass transit improvements relative to increases in on-hill capacity;
- Parking lot management, including improvements to traffic circulation to improve visitor experience and safety on and off the leasehold; and
- The Parking and Transportation Strategy will be reviewed and updated by the ski area as subsequent Long-Range Plans are submitted for review unless a different review cycle is otherwise specified by Parks Canada.

3.5.5 Environmental Management and Monitoring Strategy

Demonstrating leadership in environmental management, stewardship and best practices is one of the desired outcomes and priorities of the *Site Guidelines* with respect to key ecological considerations. Environmental management is an on-going process of monitoring evaluating and improving the environmental performance and reducing the environmental impacts associated with day-to-day ski area operations and activities.

Guidelines and Conditions – Environmental Management and Monitoring

- The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* require Long-Range Plans to include a plan for the implementation of an Environmental Management and Monitoring System based on the Sustainable Slopes, Environmental Charter for Ski Areas (USA National Ski Areas Association).



- At a minimum, the Environmental Management and Monitoring Strategy will address:
 - Energy conservation;
 - Fossil fuel emissions and greenhouse gases;
 - Wastewater management;
 - Water conservation and quality;
 - Solid waste management and reduction; and
 - Integrated pest and invasive species management.
- The Environmental Management and Monitoring Strategy will include a brief description of: the existing situation, objectives/targets, actions to achieve targets (including best management practices where applicable), time frames to implement the actions, ongoing monitoring program, and review and adaptive management/improvement actions.
- The Environmental Management and Monitoring Strategy will be reviewed and updated as subsequent Long-Range Plans are submitted for review unless a different review cycle is otherwise specified by Parks Canada.

3.6 Heritage Tourism Strategy

Ski area facilities, services and operational practices can contribute directly to a unique and memorable visitor experience that focuses on the natural and cultural heritage values of Banff National Park and the World Heritage Site. While the summer use program at Lake Louise has had a consistent focus on natural heritage interpretation and education, the *Ski Area Management Guidelines* also encourage the development of winter educational opportunities that focus on national park and world heritage site values as part of the snow riding experience.

Interpretation and education programs are only one aspect of Heritage Tourism. Building design and architecture, maintaining viewscales, and managing noise, night lighting and signage are all aspects of providing a heritage tourism experience that connects visitors to Banff National Park and protects the experience of off-site visitors.

Guidelines and Conditions

- The first Long-Range Plan is to include a Heritage Tourism Strategy for winter and summer visitors designed to educate and connect visitors with the natural and cultural values of the park and world heritage site. Heritage tourism strategies will be consistent with the outline and scope provided by Parks Canada and will be updated with subsequent Long-Range Plan submissions;
- The first ski area Long-Range Plan is to include an architectural theme and design guidelines for new buildings, exterior renovations and a sign plan consistent with



heritage tourism themes to guide design and facilitate the review of development projects; and

- The Heritage Tourism Strategy will be reviewed and updated as subsequent Long-Range Plans are submitted for review unless a different review cycle is otherwise specified by Parks Canada.

4 General Site Guidelines

The following general guidelines and conditions apply across the entire ski area unless otherwise noted in the Area Concept Development and Guidelines (Section 5).

4.1 Winter Activities

Key Considerations

Traditional and current winter activities are primarily focused around winter snow riding including downhill skiing and snowboarding, tubing and snowshoeing, along with supporting service facilities including lodges, restaurants and bars, rental and retail services.

Evolution and changes to snow riding sports may create demand for new services or infrastructure. In the past, this evolution has been demonstrated by the advent of snowboarding and half pipes, and now by increasing interest of snowboarders and skiers in terrain parks. More recently, advances in ski technology have opened up in-bounds terrain that was once considered un-skiable and the interest in accessing out-of-bounds backcountry skiing by in-bounds lifts continues to increase.

International and regional racing, ski and snowboard competitions, and special events are traditional activities but also evolve over time with new standards, equipment, support requirements and event types.

There is potential interest in other winter sports offers at the ski area such as snowshoe touring or activities for non-skiers in the base area such as skating or an ice climbing wall. New and changing activities may contribute to Parks Canada visitor experience outcomes and priorities.

Winter activities at the ski area influence winter wildlife movement and use on the ski area itself and in adjacent areas of the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor. Maintaining quiet crepuscular periods, physical space or separation and habitat parameters for wildlife are important considerations with respect to ski area winter activities, times and hours of operation.

Guidelines and Conditions - Winter Activities

- The primary focus of ski area winter use is to be on snow riding activities. Services and facilities that directly support snow riding activities such as food services, ski school, day care, rentals and other retail services are allowable uses. Related competitive and special events can take place subject to proper approvals being received consistent with each Area Concept.



- Full on-hill operations may begin two hours before lifts open and wind down two hours after lifts close. Low-use operations run from two hours after lifts close to 2:30 a.m. Conditions applicable to low-use include:
 - Less than 30 vehicle disturbances per hour on the Whitehorn Road;
 - Visitor activities are limited to base area buildings, the proposed Eagle Ridge Lodge and approved facilities;
 - Visitors are off the hill and have left the base area by 2:30 a.m.; and
 - Occasional on-hill after-hours activities may be considered subject to the Superintendent's approval.
- New snow riding features, structures or services that are consistent with established trends or the evolution of snow riding sports may be considered subject to the Superintendent's approval.
- Additional traditional non-motorized winter sport or winter recreation activities may be considered subject to the Superintendent's approval.
- New winter recreation activities may be considered for approval by Parks Canada if they are consistent with Guidelines for New Recreational Activities in Banff National Park and other related policies. They will be subject to other conditions and parameters in the *Site Guidelines*.
- Snow riding competitions and related special events that take place within the ski area lease may be considered subject to the Superintendent's approval and application of any Parks Canada special events review processes.
- The Lake Louise Ski Area will develop and implement a specific best management practice for race course management as part of any future proposal for race course improvements as part of its first Long-Range Plan submission.
- The Lake Louise Ski Area will develop and implement best management practices for competitive and special events that address noise, wildlife impact, visual impacts, skier safety and circulation as part of its first Long-Range Plan submission.

4.2 Summer Activities

Key Considerations

- The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* allow for changes to summer use subject to a number of conditions including:
 - The need to ensure continued protection of wildlife, wildlife habitat and wildlife movement;



- The concentration of visitor use to minimize wildlife impacts, with no increase to sensitive area access or increase in visitor use on adjacent lands;
 - The requirement for summer use activities to be focused on education and learning about the national park and world heritage site; and
 - The need to minimize impacts to other park visitors.
- Current and traditional summer visitor activities at the ski area have focused on hiking, natural heritage interpretation and education, wildlife viewing and sightseeing opportunities using the existing Glacier Lift for visitors to travel to the mid-mountain. Visitor support and incidental services are provided at the base lodge area including food services, a souvenir retail operation, day care and lodge-based functions such as weddings and meeting space. The mid-mountain Whitehorn Lodge near the Glacier Express Lift top terminal provides interpretive programming, food services and opportunities for short hikes.
 - The ski area provides important habitat for grizzly bears. The current summer use program has been successfully designed and managed to minimize interactions between visitors and staff, and bears on the ski area including use of exclusion fencing, visitor and staff education, management protocols and restricted hours of operation during sensitive times.
 - Maintaining and improving the effectiveness of the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor is an important objective for the broader Lake Louise area.
 - The Grizzly Gondola lift affords the opportunity to move summer visitor use higher on the mountain on the upper limits of Grizzly Bear habitat, reducing potential interactions even further while also providing potential exceptional ridge hiking and sightseeing.
 - Backcountry visitors park at the Fish Creek Trailhead to hike to the Skoki and Boulder Pass backcountry areas through the lease using the Temple Road and trail that passes near the Temple Lodge. Beyond use of this trail, the number of visitors hiking in the Whitehorn Backside Bowls, Larch/Ptarmigan area and Purple and Wolverine Bowls is low.

Guidelines and Conditions – Existing Summer Activities

The *Site Guidelines* allow for consideration of relocating the summer program from the mid-mountain to the top of the Grizzly Gondola based out of a new lodge on Eagle Ridge. Until such time as this is brought forward and approved through a Long-Range Plan, the existing summer program will continue in its present form with the existing conditions as follows:

- Continue to apply the existing limitations on summer use as follows:
 - Limit summer use to sightseeing, hiking in non-sensitive areas, educational opportunities, retail and food services at base area and Whitehorn lodges, special events and functions, operation of base area and upper lodge facilities in direct support of the summer operation;



- Prohibit mountain biking on the lease;
- Restrict ski area visitor activities to the front side, base area and upper lodge.
- Maintain a seasonal electric bear exclusion fence at mid-mountain, the base area and parking lots;
- Limit use to one lift operating between the base area and Whitehorn Lodge;
- Restrict lift hours of operation to 6a.m. to 7p.m. daily;
- Restrict base area business hours to between 6a.m. to 7p.m. until July 31. From August 1 to the end of the season operations must close before 2:30 a.m.;
- Prohibit overnight use except for staff essential to ensure security of facilities;
- Limit hiking to the area above the top of the Glacier Express Lift and on the existing Springs hiking trail. Prohibit hiking below the top of the lift terminal and below Whitehorn Lodge to the base area;
- Schedule maintenance of front-side lifts and facilities to avoid impacts to grizzly bear or other sensitive wildlife species; and
- Implement an interpretation program consistent with the Heritage Tourism Strategy as part of the first Long-Range Plan that delivers key messages contributed by Parks Canada.

Guidelines and Conditions - Relocation of Summer Use through a Long-Range Plan

- Revising and relocating summer visitor education, hiking and sightseeing opportunities (see Map 5, page 54) to the top of Grizzly Gondola and upper slopes of Whitehorn Mountain may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan submission subject to meeting the following general conditions:
 - Habitat security for grizzly bears on the ski area is improved;
 - There is effective separation between people, bears and other wildlife;
 - Visitor activity is limited to designated trails and areas; and
 - Natural heritage education and interpretation is the primary focus of the revised summer use program and services.
- In association with relocation of summer use, the development of an upper mountain trail system on the East Ridge of Mount Whitehorn may be brought forward in a Long-Range Plan. These trails must be designed to focus and contain hiking to non-sensitive areas above mid-mountain grizzly bear habitat.



- In association with relocation of summer use, the construction and use of a new lodge near the Eagle Ridge shoulder in the vicinity of the top of Grizzly Gondola may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan subject to the following design conditions:
 - Siting of the lodge maintains key movement pathways for grizzly bears travelling over or around the Eagle Ridge shoulder; and
 - Lodge design such as directional aspect, windows and deck configuration minimizes the potential for human/bear exposure or interaction.
- At the time of summer use relocation, the summer operation of Whitehorn Lodge and use of the mid-mountain will cease (see also Section 4.4 Facilities). Trails and other specific summer use infrastructure will be removed and rehabilitated.
- At the time of summer use relocation, full on-hill use of the lodges, gondola and trails system may begin as early as two hours after sunrise; the trail system will be closed, manually checked for hikers, and visitors contained to designated lodge areas two hours before sunset;
 - Prior to August 1, the last ride down on the gondola will be by approximately one half hour after sunset;
 - After August 1, the gondola and upper lodge operation may be extended into twilight and night periods allowing for an uninterrupted period of at least six hours each night to provide significant and predictable low disturbance periods for resident grizzly bears; and
 - Between the time of trails closing and last ride down, visitor activities will be planned and managed in accordance with the conditions of bullet seven.
- Proposals for extended use of the gondola and upper lodge into twilight and night periods prior to August 1 may be brought forward in a Long-Range Plan subject to the following conditions:
 - A wildlife crossing structure (underpass) is installed on the Whitehorn Road by the Lake Louise Ski Area;
 - The Lake Louise Ski Area relocates the Fish Creek Road and public parking area to start in the general vicinity of the existing parking lot one and link it by road to the existing Fish Creek Trailhead and Temple Road;
 - Upon completion of the crossing structure and Fish Creek Road relocation, the Fish Creek Road would be closed and rehabilitated by Parks Canada; Parks Canada and the Lake Louise Ski Area will investigate ways of improving summer visitor access from the ski area to Temple Lodge such as a shuttle system, trail improvements and other measures;
 - Measures to manage visitor access and maintain vehicle disturbances at levels below 30 vehicles per hour along Whitehorn Road are implemented; the gondola and upper lodge are closed to visitor use for an uninterrupted period of eight hours each night to provide significant and predictable low disturbance periods for resident grizzly bears;



and ongoing monitoring demonstrates successful implementation of the mitigations and conditions as described below.

- Where permitted in accordance with the conditions above, the use of the gondola and upper mountain lodge into twilight and night periods as brought forward in a Long-Range Plan will be planned and managed in accordance with the following guidelines and conditions:
 - Formal visitor activities and events will be confined to the lodge indoors recognizing that informal and incidental use of lodge decks and pathways will occur; Effective separation between bears and lodge visitors is put in place to manage incidental outdoor lodge use including the use of decks, walkways, viewpoints and loading/unloading from the gondola area; Artificial or natural cover for moving wildlife is maintained between fenced areas of the lodge and wildlife movement pathways; Noise from outdoor visitor use is contained at decibel levels that would not disturb wildlife beyond 100m from the lodge; and Direct or ambient lighting from the lodge or outside areas is contained so as to not penetrate into wildlife movement pathways.
- At the time of summer use relocation, full operation of the base area may begin as early as one hour after sunrise in preparation for full operation. Prior to August 1, operation of the base area will cease by approximately one hour after sunset. After August 1, the base area operation may be extended into twilight and night periods allowing for an undisturbed period of at least six hours each night to provide significant and predictable low disturbance periods for resident grizzly bears and other wildlife.

Proposals for extended use of the base area into evening and night periods prior to August 1 may be brought forward in a *Long-Range Plan* subject to improvements to the Whitehorn wildlife corridor and other conditions outlined above.

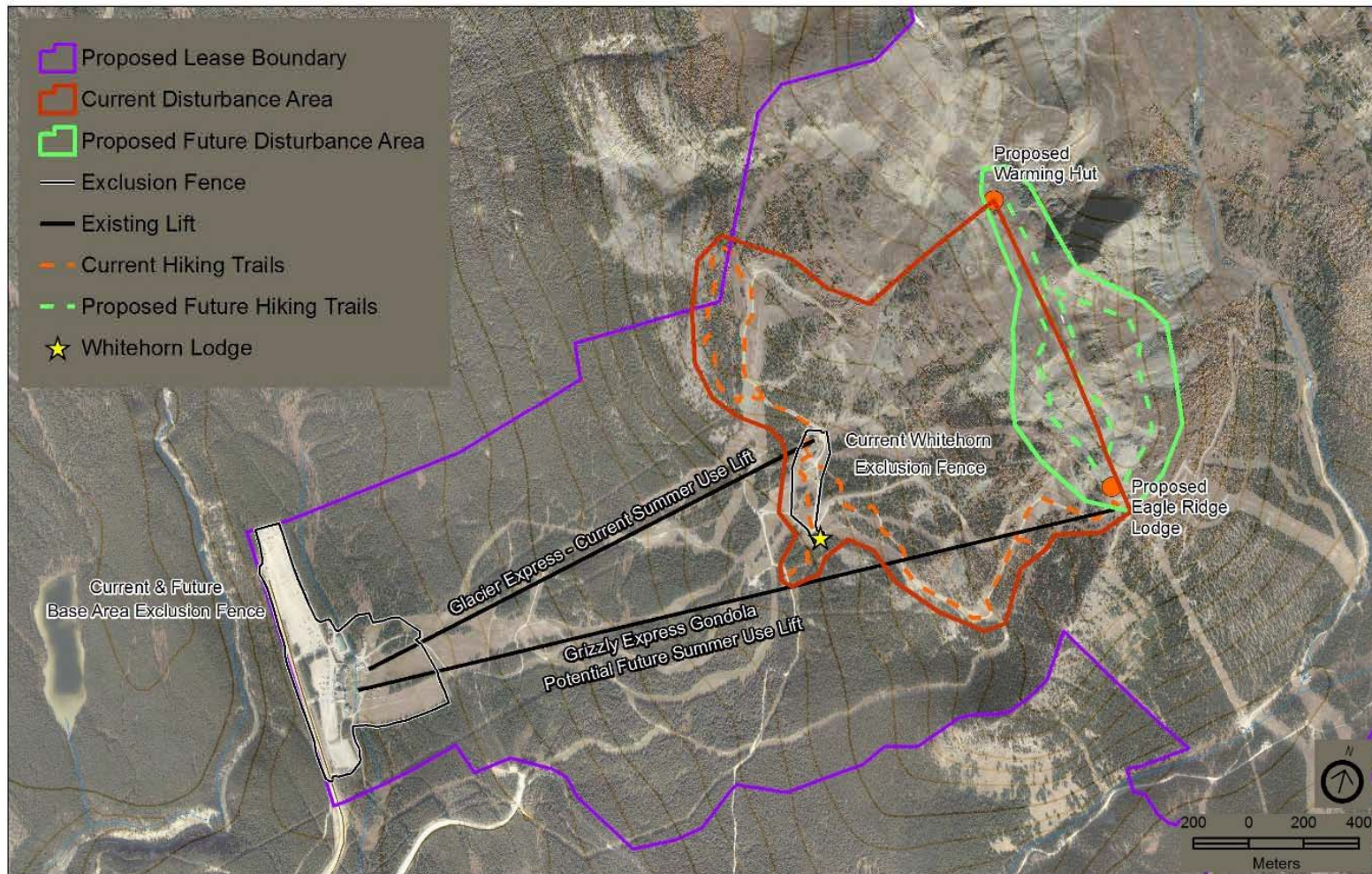
4.3 Parking and Access

Key Considerations

- Winter parking on Whitehorn Road, the main access road to the ski area, frequently occurs even when there is space available in parking lots. On peak days (most weekends and holidays) parking along the road can extend off the leasehold beyond the Fish Creek turnoff and occasionally traffic can back up onto the Trans-Canada Highway. This situation poses a significant safety hazard to motorists and a significant safety risk to visitors who park and walk along the road to get to the ski area and also provides a very poor visitor experience;
- Parking along Whitehorn Road interferes with the effectiveness of the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor which is bisected by the access road. Heavy traffic volumes and parking on the road combine to reduce the ability of wildlife to move through the area;



Map 5. Lake Louise Ski Area: Existing and Proposed Summer Use





- The furthest of the existing ski area parking lots are past the ski industry standard comfortable walking distance of 500m for skiers to access the base area. The existing base area itself is near acceptable industry capacity for handling peak visitor flows and overcapacity on the busiest ski days of the year; and
- The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* indicate that mass transit will be the primary means of addressing ski area parking issues and prohibit the development of new parking nodes. However, effective parking management, vehicle access and circulation improvements, and skier shuttle systems may be anticipated to result in significant improvements.

Guidelines and Conditions – Parking and Access

- Develop a Parking and Transportation Strategy as per Section 3.5.4 for any Long-Range Plan that includes an increase in ski terrain, commercial space or out-of-base lift capacity. Parks Canada will prepare the terms of reference for the strategy taking into consideration the requirements as outlined in the *Site Guidelines*.
- Parking and Transportation access strategies at the ski area are to complement and be integrated with broader regional transportation initiatives.
- Parks Canada will prohibit parking on the Whitehorn Road beyond the new lease boundary at the time of the first Long-Range Plan approval.
- Following approval of the first Long-Range Plan, the ski area will permit overflow parking on the Whitehorn Road within the lease area only when existing parking lots have reached capacity.
- Redevelopment of parking lots within the existing parking lot footprint to provide additional parking capacity, to improve vehicle and pedestrian circulation, or to facilitate convenient mass transit may be considered in advance of the first Long-Range Plan.
- Skier pedestrian shuttle systems or people mover lifts within the existing parking lot footprint may be considered in advance of a Long-Range Plan as part of reducing roadway parking and improving visitor experience.
- Any expansion of parking lots beyond the existing parking lot footprint will be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan.
- Expansion of parking within the lease and in the vicinity of the base area may be considered in a Long-Range Plan under condition that:
 - Maximum, practical, efficiency and capacity of existing parking and mass transit systems have been achieved as per the above guidelines; and
 - Restoration and enhancement of wildlife movement routes through the ski area are put in place to maintain or restore wildlife corridor effectiveness at the time of implementation.



- Use of the ski area parking lots will be consistent with the park management plan.
- The development of service roads or trails to or in West Bowl or Hidden Bowl beyond the current main Whitehorn Mountain and Temple Road access and egress routes will not be considered.
- Within the ski area lease, service roads or trails required for the operation of the ski hill will be consolidated where feasible to minimize linear disturbance. New service roads or trails in the alpine will not be considered.
- Temporary roads, new or expanded service road development or intensified use of them on the ski area including Temple Road will be submitted as part of Long-Range Plans.
- Visitor use of the ski area parking lots for purposes other than winter and summer visitor parking during specified operating hours will not be considered.

4.4 Facilities

Key Considerations

- Public commercial space at the Lake Louise Ski Area is consistent with the scope of winter and summer visitor activities allowed with typical ski industry facilities. These Lake Louise Ski Area facilities generally include day lodges, food services, lockers, ticket sales, rental services, retail equipment and souvenirs, ski school and a day care with year-round community service;
- The size and history of the ski area have resulted in the development of four day lodges: two at the base area along with a base area gazebo, one at mid-mountain on the front side and another serving the Temple area. The need to provide or expand remote facilities will become a key consideration as skiable terrain increases;
- As the ski area grows, the day lodges and amenities such as day care, rentals and food services will need to expand to remain in balance with other resort components;
- There is no visitor accommodation on the hill and *the Ski Area Management Guidelines* do not allow for the development of new on-hill accommodation. Accommodation is available in the community of Lake Louise, Upper Lake Louise, nearby Outlying Commercial Accommodations (OCAs) and the towns of Banff, Canmore and Field. The existing supply of rooms in the area and the potential growth (consistent with the growth limits in the OCA Guidelines and community plans) in the region is anticipated to be sufficient to meet future demand;
- Buildings and facilities required for the operation of the ski hill are dispersed throughout the site. These generally include maintenance yards/buildings, offices, paint/sign shop, lift huts, first aid facilities, ski patrol huts, snow making operations, avalanche control facilities etc; and



- Ski area race event and competitions are associated with facility and infrastructure requirements that change and evolve over time including facilities for organizers, athletes, media and spectators.

Guidelines and Conditions – Facilities

- Renovation or redevelopment of existing facilities that does not result in an increase in commercial space may be brought forward in advance of Long-Range Plans consistent with the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*;
- New public buildings or redevelopment or expansion of existing day lodges and public facilities that result in an increase in commercial space capacity must be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan along with the associated requirements of the *Site Guidelines*;
- Facility proposals that involve an increase in commercial space must demonstrate how they are consistent with resort balance and align with commercial space design capacity limits;
- Skiers will continue to find visitor accommodation in the communities of Lake Louise, Banff, Canmore, Field and at Outlying Commercial Accommodations (OCAs);
- Proposed new buildings and renovations will reflect the ski area's Heritage Tourism Strategy and be consistent with architectural themes (see also Section 3.6 Heritage Tourism);
- Redevelopment and replacement of maintenance buildings may be brought forward in advance of the *first* Long-Range Plan consistent with the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*. Operations buildings and yards will be consolidated where feasible. Buildings and associated facilities no longer needed must be removed and their sites rehabilitated as a condition of the permitting process;
- New or expanded permanent buildings and facilities needed to meet World Cup race event standards may be considered through Long-Range Plans. Any such facilities must be considered with respect to how they may be used or contribute to commercial and operational capacity;
- Energy conservation and efficiency must be incorporated in the development of all new or renovated public and operational buildings; and
- New warming huts may be brought forward in a Long-Range Plan consistent with the associated requirements in the applicable area concept. Warming huts are small, family oriented day use facilities providing heated shelter, washrooms and basic snack and beverage services.



4.5 Ski Run and Vegetation Management

Key Considerations

- Developed trail terrain at the Lake Louise Ski Area is in balance with ski industry standards for the amount of beginner, intermediate and advanced skier levels. The table below outlines the amount of existing ski terrain by skier/snowboarder category compared to industry standards:

Category	Existing Terrain	Industry Standard
Beginner/Novice	23%	15-20%
Intermediate	59%	55-65%
Advanced/Expert	18%	15-30%

- Undeveloped terrain at the ski area such as bowls, chutes and glades would generally be classified in the intermediate and advanced categories, resulting in more skiable terrain options for the corresponding level of skier. As well, variable weather and snow conditions for these areas at certain times also limit this terrain to more advanced skier levels. Considering undeveloped together with developed terrain means there is more upper intermediate and advanced terrain at the Lake Louise Ski Area;
- While within the industry standard for skier level balance, the layout of the ski area means that many beginner/intermediate runs are used by all levels of skiers. This results in bottlenecks and congestion on these runs and on skiways that link terrain at these levels. Heavy use of easier runs and connecting skiways by all skier levels results in crowded conditions and an intensity of use that creates snow retention, grooming, skier safety and visitor experience issues;
- Ski area run clearing, glading and ongoing vegetation management such as limbing of trees and brushing to maintain runs and ski lines modify forest cover conditions for wildlife, impact ground cover and understory conditions and may impact rare and sensitive species;
- Run clearing, glading and vegetation management can be undertaken in ways that are complementary to park vegetation management and ecological objectives such as fire and fuel control management and associated wildlife habitat enhancement;
- Whitebark pine is prevalent on the ski area, but as with other vegetation, vegetation management may be carried out in non-detrimental ways, or in ways that have the potential to contribute to species recovery objectives; and
- The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* require that Long-Range Plans include a Run Improvement and Vegetation Management Strategy.



Guidelines and Conditions – Ski Run and Vegetation Management

- Long-Range Plans are to include a Ski Run and Vegetation Improvement Strategy as part of every Long-Range Plan consistent with Section 3.5.3 regardless of whether or not the Long-Range Plan includes proposals for changes or expansion of ski terrain. Parks Canada will prepare the terms of reference for the strategy taking into consideration the requirements outlined in the *Site Guidelines*;
- Consider new runs, new glading, run widening, and specific beginner/intermediate areas within the approved adjusted developed area as part of a Long-Range Plan consistent with the area concepts and ecological management parameters of the *Site Guidelines*;
- New run and glading proposals presented in Long-Range Plans will be consistent with ski terrain and developed area growth limits and will demonstrate how they contribute to ski area balance, visitor safety and enhanced visitor experience;
- Regular ski area vegetation management including the maintenance of existing runs and glades may occur outside of a Long-Range Plan subject to the application of the Best Management Practices for Development at Ski Areas in Banff and Jasper National Parks of Canada;
- Future development and use proposals need to be consistent with the Mitigating Measures, Long-Range *Planning* parameters specific to Whitebark pine in the Strategic Environmental Assessment; and
- Regular ski area vegetation and run management with potential impacts to Whitebark pine may proceed outside of a Long-Range Plan subject to Best Management Practices provided by Parks Canada.

4.6 Terrain Modification

Key Considerations

- A few locations throughout the ski area feature narrow skiways providing access from one ski pod to another which can be challenging for beginner and lower intermediate skiers to navigate, are points of congestion, and create potential safety hazards. Improvements to existing skiways are permitted by the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*;
- A number of these existing skiways are in the alpine where lengthy rehabilitation, aesthetic impacts and the ecological values of alpine environments require careful management to avoid permanent scarring and to minimize the impact of iconic viewscapes on non-ski area visitors. Of particular concern are the Sunset and Homerun ski way traverses; and
- A variety of terrain challenges exist across the ski area including narrow, steep trails, areas prone to icing or that do not retain snow. Portions of some existing intermediate and novice runs contain steeper pitches inconsistent with the run rating. These problems



are pronounced in the Mount Whitehorn front side because of natural terrain variations and the way original ski runs were developed.

Guidelines and Conditions – Terrain Modification

- Terrain modification required with other approved ski area developments such as buildings, or lift terminals is inherent to those development processes and not subject to the guidelines and conditions in this section;
- Rock or other hazard removal within existing ski terrain, to address skier or operational safety issues, may be advanced outside of a Long-Range Plan;
- Improvements to existing drainage installations and the installation of new systems to reduce erosion and icing, or to protect natural drainage channels may be considered outside of a Long-Range Plan;
- Proposals for the improvement of existing skiways are not considered exceptions under the *Ski Area Management Guidelines* and may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan subject to the following conditions:
 - Improvements to alpine skiways do not rely on cut-and-fill approaches;
 - Alpine ski-way structures and designs are visually unobtrusive from locations outside of the ski area. Visual impact modelling will be part of Long-Range Plan ski-way proposals; and
 - The use of structures that avoids the need for major terrain modification and is readily reversible may be considered.
- Terrain modification is to be undertaken using low-impact equipment, machines and techniques to ensure minimal disturbance, quicker rehabilitation and minimal visual impact;
- Apply the criteria outlined in Appendix Two to classify terrain modification as either minor or major.
- Terrain modification proposals other than those outlined above will be brought forward as part of Long-Range Plans subject to the following planning guidelines:
 - New ski runs and reconfiguration of existing runs are designed to avoid the need for major terrain modification;
 - Terrain modification is proposed only where configuration of existing runs, lifts or vegetation cannot address safety, environmental or operational issues;
 - Terrain modification is proposed primarily where essential to skier safety including management of constricted, icy, congested, situations and sudden drops and visibility; and



- Terrain modification is proposed only for stable slopes within the leasehold area where reclamation is assured.
- Terrain modification proposals may be proposed in a Long-Range Plan where the following criteria can be met:
 - Limited to the alteration of isolated physical features; major features remain;
 - No impact to unique or sensitive features;
 - Readily reclaimed to native vegetation cover consistent with the Ski Area Best Management practices;
 - Ecological and aesthetic conditions are maintained without future restoration;
 - Undetectable from a distance of 0.5 km after reclamation; and
 - Natural appearance consistent with local terrain variation.
- Proposals that meet these criteria are considered minor modifications. Initiatives that are inconsistent with any one of these criteria are considered significant (major) terrain modification and can only be considered if they are approved as potential exceptions to the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*.
- Major Terrain Modification as exceptions may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan under the following conditions:
 - The proposal is consistent with exceptions outlined under the appropriate area concepts in the *Site Guidelines*;
 - New lease is in place; and
 - The project is below tree line.
- Existing watercourse crossings should be used and improved wherever possible in the planning and design of new ski terrain in order to minimize the total number of crossings. Any new crossings will:
 - Consist of a single span bridge or similar structure that does not result in a disturbance or alteration to the active creek channel, banks or riparian area; and
- Be designed and managed in conjunction with improvements to existing crossings. The design of replacement crossing structures will include site improvements to restore or enhance fish habitat characteristics.

4.7 Snowmaking

Key Considerations

- The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* allow for the expansion or modification of snowmaking systems at ski areas;



- Snowmaking has become an important element of providing a safe, high-quality snow riding experience at ski areas worldwide. For Lake Louise, snowmaking is particularly important in relation to a reasonably predictable season opening, in preparation for the FIS (International Ski Federation) World Cup races traditionally held at the ski area as the first events of the international world cup season. It also ensures good and safe conditions for the first busy days at the ski area during the December holiday season;
- Water to support snowmaking operations comes from the Pipestone River, important habitat for Bull and Westslope cutthroat trout. Water withdrawal is managed to ensure that minimum in-stream flows are maintained in support of fish and fish habitat. In most years the water withdrawal limits are adequate to meet the ski area's current and projected needs. However, periodically, low early winter water levels result in shortage of water to meet the ski area's early season requirements;
- Warming climate conditions are expected to shorten the potential ski season, raise the early season freezing temperature elevation which is critical to snowmaking, and reduce water availability during fall and winter seasons. Of these factors, securing an adequate water supply is the only one that the ski area may have influence over;
- Alternative water supplies from recycling, surface drainage, or groundwater sources may have potential as supplemental snowmaking water supply sources. Water storage reservoirs which can capture water from multiple sources, or which can be designed to be filled when high ground or surface water levels exist offer increased water supply security and may improve the security of fish habitat during low flow seasons; and
- Extensive permanent and movable fencing is used in alpine areas to collect snow and reduce the impact of wind scouring. Snow "farming" is an alternative to snowmaking in some areas. However, long uninterrupted snow fence lines can impede wildlife movement, be hazards in low-light conditions and impair the sense of place for non-ski area visitors.

Guidelines and Conditions - Snowmaking

- Changes to snowmaking infrastructure and terrain covered by snowmaking are to be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan;
- Develop a Water Management Strategy and Snowmaking Infrastructure Plan as per Section 3.5.2 for any Long-Range Plan that includes changes to snowmaking and water withdrawal systems, or that involves an increase in ski terrain snowmaking capacity;
- The construction and use of snowmaking water reservoirs may be brought forward in a Long-Range Plan subject to the following conditions:
 - A reservoir may be considered in the area of the old gondola base to reduce the reliance and impact of on-demand water withdrawal on Pipestone River habitat;
 - A reservoir may be considered in the vicinity of the Larch/Temple base area that does not rely on direct water withdrawal from Corral Creek but uses alternative water sources; and



- The design of water reservoir systems will account for maintaining seasonal variations in stream flow that support the needs of fish and riparian communities.
- Changes to water withdrawal limits or management systems from the Pipestone River may only be brought forward through a Long-Range Plan. Such changes will be based on a detailed professional analysis, and independent peer review of minimum in-stream flow needs required for Westslope cutthroat trout and other fish and aquatic species;
- Measures to improve current snowmaking and water use efficiency including improvements in on-hill equipment, pumping systems, and snowmaking nucleating systems may be brought forward in advance of a Long-Range Plan;
- Continue to use water permits for managing water withdrawals from aquatic resources. Obtain Parks Canada approvals for the use of chemicals or other additives for snowmaking;
- Temporary snow fencing and snow farming may continue in advance of a Long-Range Plan;
- Permanent snow fencing and snow farming will be considered as viable alternatives to expansion of snowmaking systems and may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan;
- Continue to allow night-time operational activities related to snowmaking, grooming and snowploughing; and
- Continue to apply the Best Management Practices for Development at Ski Areas in Banff and Jasper National Parks of Canada for permanent snow fencing and apply them to temporary fencing where warranted.

4.8 Ski Lifts

Key Considerations

- The *Ski Area Management Guidelines* allow for lift replacement, upgrade, realignment and new lifts within the developed area. The guidelines also clearly indicate that out-of-base and total lift capacity must be balanced with the approved ski terrain and design capacity growth limits;
- Ski lifts are associated with limits to ski terrain and any exceptions for new ski terrain as proposed in the *Lake Louise Ski Area Site Guidelines for Development and Use*. They are not considered to be exceptions in and of themselves. Likewise, ski lifts unavoidably involve terrain modification for the construction of lift bases, terminals and towers. Terrain modification associated with ski lifts is considered where necessary in accordance with the ski lift proposals associated with specific area concepts. Terrain modification guidelines in Section 4.6 do not apply to the consideration of ski lifts;



- The Lake Louise Ski Area currently operates ten lifts. These include the Grizzly Gondola, high speed-detachable lifts, fixed grip lifts, a platter and magic carpets. The ski area also has three magic carpets in its beginner areas. Three lifts are currently not used – the Olympic and Eagle Chairlifts and the original gondola (sedan lift) that ran from the Trans-Canada Highway to Whitehorn Lodge;
- Lift structures have a limited lifespan and technologies improve over time. Replacement of outdated lifts eases maintenance requirements and costs and generally offer skiers quicker ascents and shorter lift lines. Adjustments to lift alignments or new lifts may be planned to improve skier circulation and more efficient access to different skiing pods. This in turn may potentially reduce the need for long alpine skiways;
- Lifts or lift systems that exceed the capacity of ski terrain, commercial space or parking capacity can exert undue pressure on these other elements of ski area infrastructure by attracting skiers to an area that does not meet industry standards for visitor experience, safety or comfort.

Guidelines and Conditions –Ski Lifts

- Consider the replacement and upgrade of existing lifts outside of a Long-Range Plan under conditions that resort balance is improved or maintained consistent with the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*;
- Consider new lifts or the realignment of existing lifts as part of Long-Range Plans. Lift development proposals advanced in a Long-Range Plan will:
 - Demonstrate consistency with design capacity limits and resort balance;
 - Provide guests timely, convenient and safe access to the terrain and conditions most suited to them; and
 - Take into account skier access, and circulation to reduce and avoid congestion at skiways, ski run and terrain pinch points, and base area and upper lift terminals.
- Lift development will be coordinated with changes to ski terrain, parking capacity and mass transit improvements to maintain resort balance. Parking and mass transit capacity needs to be sufficient to support added skier capacity arising from new and upgraded lifts;
- Current unused lifts and lifts being replaced will be removed and their sites rehabilitated as detailed in each area concept; and
- New lifts and lift replacements will utilize energy efficient technologies.

5 Area Development Concepts and Guidelines (Map 6, page 68)

For the purposes of the *Lake Louise Ski Area Site Guidelines for Development and Use* and future Long-Range Plans the ski area has been divided on an operational and geographical basis into smaller management and development areas called area concepts.



Unless specified in each area concept outlined in this section, Section 3 of these *Site Guidelines* entitled “Ski Area Development and Management Direction” and Section 4 “General *Site Guidelines*” applies to all development proposals and the management of the ski area.

Each area concept provides a vision outlining future development and use along with specific guidelines and conditions that reinforce or support the vision. Area concepts are aimed at providing appropriate visitor experiences, infrastructure, and operational support systems that address the needs of different markets, visitor types, and types of use. Building from the rest of the *Site Guidelines*, including sections 3 and 4, the area concepts outlines the types of use, infrastructure and facilities, and operations including specific proposals that may be brought forward for each area as part of a Long-Range Plan. Specific area concepts have been developed for the Base Area, Whitehorn Front Side, Whitehorn Back Bowls, West Bowl, Temple Area (Ptarmigan/Larch area) and Hidden Bowl (see Map 6).

5.1 Base Area Concept and Guidelines (Map 7, page 69)

5.1.1 Base Area Vision

The Base Area serves as the operational hub as well as the visitor welcome centre and portal to the rest of the ski area for summer and winter visitors. Visitor services are characterized by design that facilitates ease of access, visitor circulation and efficient business transactions. Visitor information, interpretation and education make clear links to Banff National Park and contribute to a sense of welcome to the park. While designed to facilitate high intensity use, Base Area facilities establish the design and architectural theme for the rest of the ski area, characterized by attractive log and stone construction, peaked rooflines and sweeping panoramas. Overall layout is clean, organized, uncluttered and uncrowded. This same aesthetic is prevalent in all Base Area elements experienced by visitors, from parking and operational buildings to supporting infrastructure such as signage, walkways or railings. Whether arriving by private vehicle or mass transit, visitor movement through the Base Area and onto lifts is quick and efficient.

While serving as the gateway to the rest of the ski area for experienced snow riders, non-skiers are invited to experience winter through snow-based winter mountain recreation activities that may be supported by infrastructure such as a tube park, skating rink or ice climbing wall dispersed throughout the Base Area to provide unique and uncrowded experiences. Special events such as the Lake Louise Winter Festival and the FIS (International Ski Federation) World Cup are staged from the Base Area a few times a season drawing a variety of new visitors to the ski area for unique mountain winter sport and mountain culture experiences.

For the summer visitor, the Base Area serves as a “view-from-the-edge” summer learning destination featuring the latest tools and techniques for personal interpretation and learning programs, non-personal interpretive and educational media and modern communication/education tools such as mobile applications or use of live webcams. Summer Base Area learning programs focus on Rocky Mountain wildlife and encourage visitors to step a bit further into the mountain park wilderness through the upper mountain experience.



5.1.2 Base Area Winter Visitor Activity Guidelines

- The Base Area serves as the staging area for winter visitor and operational activities in support of snow riding and approved special events;
- Additional winter outdoor recreation activities such as skating, ice climbing, or snowshoeing may be located or staged from the Base Area;
 - New activities or activities that require new or modified facilities in the Base Area will be considered as part of a Long-Range Plan. Activities that take place on ski runs and that involve sliding downhill similar to skiing and snowboarding and do not rely on the development of permanent infrastructure may be considered outside of a Long-Range Plan subject to Superintendent approval.

Operating hours for Base Area buildings and facilities will be consistent with the *General Site Guidelines*, Section 4.1.

- Lighted night skiing or other on-hill visitor activities in the Base Area will not be considered outside of established winter snow riding season operating hours in order to protect periods of predictable wildlife habitat and movement security;
- Outdoor functions or outdoor special events that take place outside of established winter snow riding season operating hours may be considered subject to Superintendent approval assuring that periods of predictable wildlife habitat and movement security are maintained; and
- Indoor lodge based functions may take place outside of established winter snow riding season operating hours subject to maintaining low levels of vehicle use on Whitehorn Road, low noise levels and as otherwise permitted by the Field Unit's special event process.

5.1.3 Base Area Summer Visitor Activity Guidelines

- The Base Area serves as the staging area for summer visitor and operational activities in support of natural heritage education and interpretation, wildlife viewing, sightseeing and upper mountain hiking opportunities;
- Additional summer visitor activities or outdoor special events and functions that focus on learning about the park and the world heritage site may be considered within the fenced Base Area perimeter subject to the ecological protection requirements of the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*;
- Activities that require new or modified facilities in the Base Area may be considered as part of a Long-Range Plan. Activities that do not rely on the development of permanent infrastructure may be considered outside of a Long-Range Plan subject to the Superintendent's approval;
- Operating hours for Base Area buildings and facilities will be consistent with *General Site Guidelines*, Section 4.2;



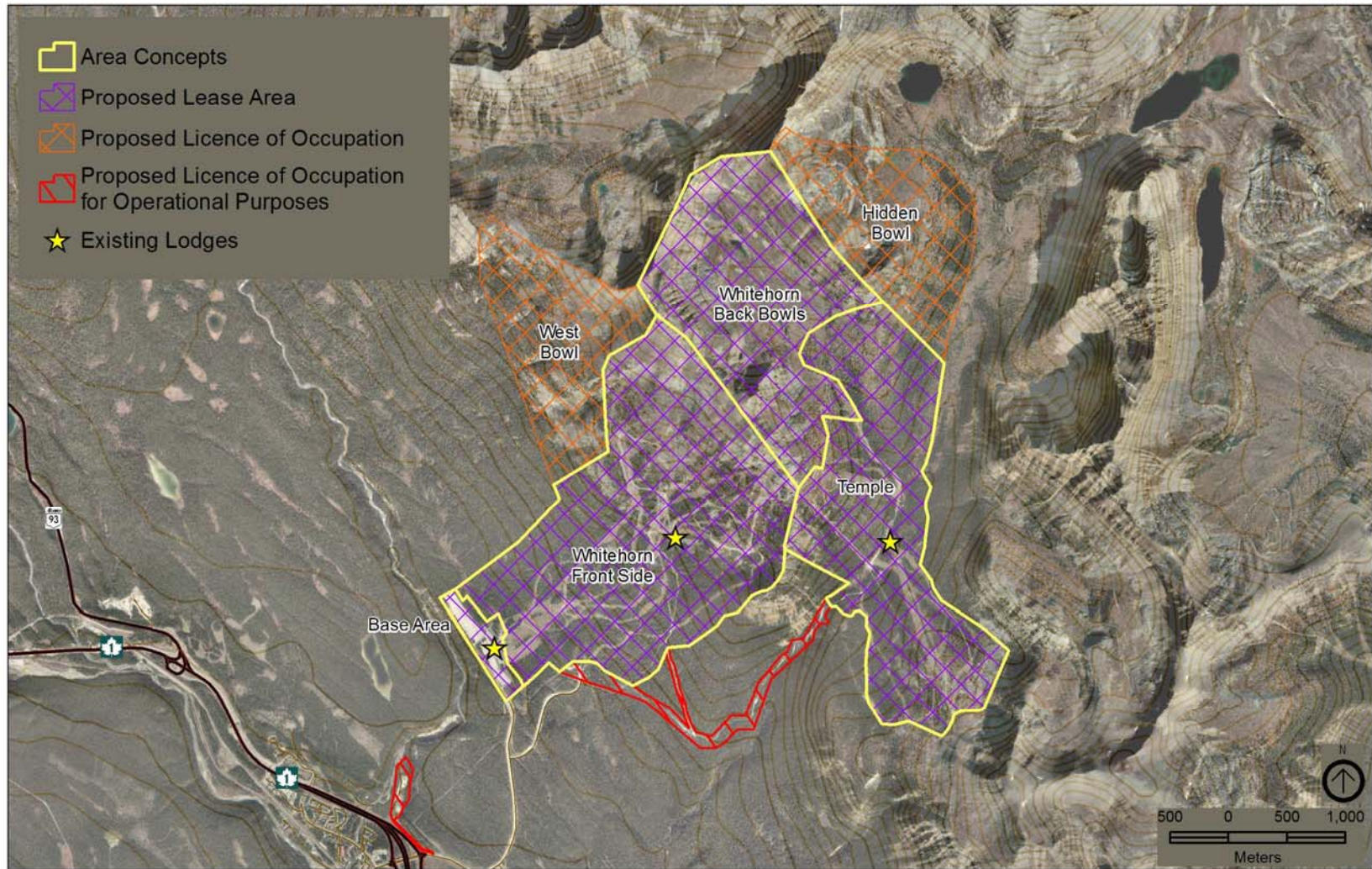
- Outdoor functions or outdoor special events that take place outside of established summer season operating hours will not be considered in order to protect periods of predictable wildlife habitat and movement security; and
- Indoor lodge-based functions may take place outside of summer season visitor operating hours subject to maintaining low levels of vehicle use on Whitehorn Road, low noise levels or as otherwise permitted as a special event.

5.1.4 Base Area Visitor and Operational Access Guidelines

- The Whitehorn Road will provide sole visitor motor vehicle access to the ski area in winter and summer seasons;
- Use of Temple Road by vehicles will be limited to ski area staff and Parks Canada for operational access.
- The Temple Road, associated trailhead and ski-out will continue to facilitate visitor access by skiing and hiking through the ski area to the Skoki trail and other backcountry areas of the park;
- The ski area currently has approximately 1,176 private vehicle parking spaces within the ski area industry comfortable walking distance standard of 500m to the existing Base Area. It also currently has 30 bus parking stalls. A proposed lift base near parking lot four would bring this lot within the industry walking standard and add 840 additional spaces. Potential expansion of existing lots within the general vicinity of the Base Area would add 1,087 spaces and parking along the road within the new lease boundary would add 153 spaces;
- Existing Base Area parking lots may be expanded corresponding with the general locations identified in Map 7 through a Long-Range Plan consistent with the requirement to maintain effectiveness of the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor;
- New parking nodes will not be generally considered in order to protect established wildlife movement pathways in the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor unless accompanied by specific measures that ensure corridor effectiveness is maintained or improved;
- Use of the ski area parking lots will be consistent with the park management plan;
- Existing operations buildings may be relocated, consolidated or replaced with similar uses or with parking or parking structures as part of a Long-Range Plan;
- People mover lifts or shuttle systems may be considered through a Long-Range Plan within the Base Area to move people from far parking lots to the main Base Area. People mover lifts or shuttles are to be incorporated in the Parking and Transportation Strategy (Sections 3.5.4 and 4.3); and
- Use of the old gondola base through a Licence of Occupation will be limited to operational access and use including operational support for approved special events.

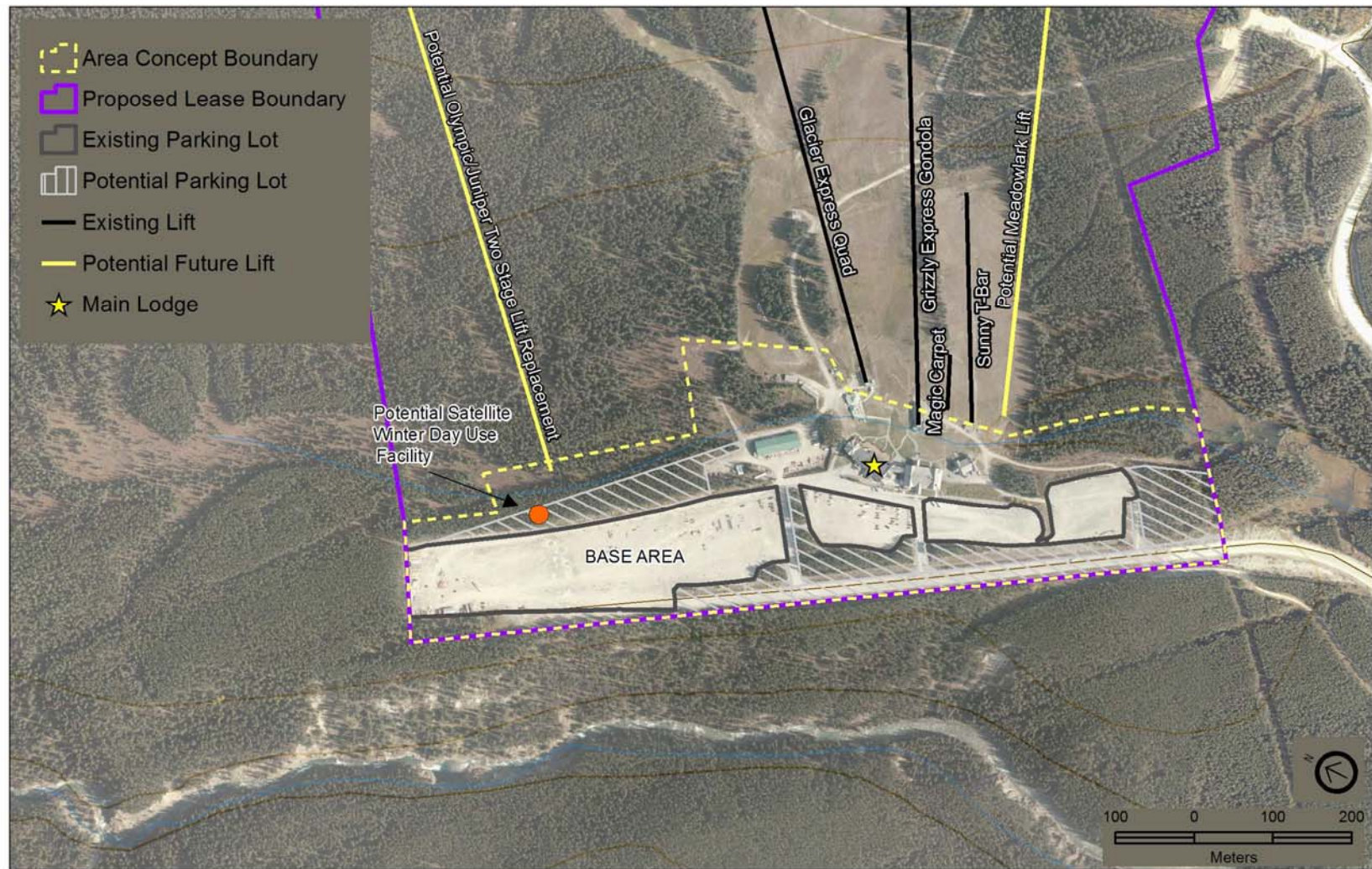


Map 6. Area Concepts for the Lake Louise Ski Area





Map 7. Base Area Concept for the Lake Louise Ski Area





5.1.5 Base Area Facility Guidelines

- Lodges and commercial buildings in the existing Base Area may be renovated or modified outside of a Long-Range Plan if maintaining a similar footprint of commercial space consistent with maintaining resort balance and the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*;
- Commercial buildings in the existing Base Area complex may be replaced or expanded as part of a Long-Range Plan consistent with maintaining resort balance and within commercial space growth limits;
- New buildings in the Base Area will come forward as part of a Long-Range Plan consistent with maintaining resort balance and within commercial space growth limits;
- A winter day use use only satellite facility associated with a new lift adjacent to existing parking lots three and four may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan to reduce congestion in the main Base Area and to expedite direct skier access to the Whitehorn Front Side runs; and
- Existing operational buildings and facilities in the main Base Area or at the old gondola base may be moved, replaced, modified or consolidated outside of a Long-Range Plan to support ski area operations and short-term storage for special events consistent with the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*.

5.1.6 Base Area Runs, Glading and Vegetation Management Guidelines

- Vegetation clearing, terrain modification and modification of surface drainage patterns for new building or parking development approved in a Long-Range Plan will be planned and designed to support the seasonal function of adjacent natural watercourses and water bodies.
- Development and management of ski runs associated with an expanded Sunny T beginner area, or runs associated with Juniper, Meadowlark or Olympic lifts are to be addressed as part of the Whitehorn Front Side Area Concept; and
- New or reconfigured lift bases, lifts and cleared lift lines associated with an expanded Sunny T beginner area, or lifts and runs associated with Juniper, Meadowlark or Olympic lifts are addressed as part of the Whitehorn Front Side Area Concept.

5.1.7 Base Area Terrain Modification Guidelines

- Terrain modification required in relation to approved buildings, structures or parking areas will be minimized through design and location.

5.1.8 Base Area Snowmaking Guidelines

- Snowmaking infrastructure may be expanded to cover new terrain in the Base Area as part of Long-Range Plans;



- Snowmaking or use of the snowmaking systems in the Base Area may be considered in support of other approved Base Area winter activities outside of a Long-Range Plan consistent with the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*;
- The old gondola base area will remain the primary location for the snowmaking water supply system;
 - Adjustments to the Pipestone River intake system to ensure adequate access to water flow or to provide environmental protection may be considered outside of a Long-Range Plan subject to project review and impact assessment processes; and
 - A snowmaking water reservoir may be brought forward through a Long-Range Plan in the gondola base area for the purpose of ensuring a more reliable early season water supply and to reduce the need for on-demand water withdrawal from the Pipestone River during low flow periods.

5.1.9 Base Area Ski Lift Guidelines

- New lifts or replacement lifts that are accessed from the Base Area are addressed as part of the Whitehorn Front Side concept in Section 5.2; and
- Remove the infrastructure and restore the land associated with the old original gondola lift, including towers, buildings and employee housing that are no longer used, between the Trans-Canada Highway and Whitehorn Lodge as part of the development approval with the first new lift development for the Whitehorn Front Side put forward in a Long-Range Plan. The gondola base building may remain for storage only.

5.2 Mount Whitehorn Front Side Area Concept and Guidelines (Map 8, page 73)

5.2.1 Mount Whitehorn Front Side Area Vision

The front side of Mount Whitehorn overlooks the Bow Valley and the spectacular peaks of the Continental Divide above Lake Louise. Grizzly bears often frequent the cleared ski runs of the Front Side and the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor traverses the lower angled slopes on the lower half of the mountain. Frequent wildlife use presents an opportunity for visitors to view and experience wildlife, while at the same time presenting the challenge of effectively limiting wildlife disturbance and habituation associated with development and visitor use;

Winter ski season on the Whitehorn Front Side features the highest density visitor use, lift and ski terrain development within the ski area. The Front Side features one of the highest vertical drops in Canada, a wide variety of terrain and snow conditions for experienced skiers and snowboarders, groomed and maintained slopes that facilitate use by novice to intermediates and is supported by snowmaking and visually unobtrusive terrain modifications. In winter, the mid-mountain Whitehorn Lodge and the proposed Eagle Ridge Lodge provide snow riders with alternative lodge services that complement and reduce congestion at the base area lodges. The Whitehorn Front Side is the traditional home of early season FIS (International Ski Federation) World Cup racing events and serves as the focal point for World Cup and other competitive events. Skier experience and safety in this high intensity use area is maximized with the



appropriate balance and distribution of lifts, ski terrain and facilities reflecting ski area industry standards. At the same time, ski runs, glades, lifts and other infrastructure on the lower mountain are designed and managed to facilitate effective wildlife movement and provide suitable wildlife habitat;

New and less experienced winter visitors are welcomed to the lower Front Side with specific areas adjacent to the base area focused on serving the novice, beginner, and family segments of the ski and snowboard markets. Novice riders, families and children can feel secure in areas that are set aside and designed for comfort, safety and low speeds;

For summer visitors, the Grizzly Gondola, the proposed Eagle Ridge Shoulder Lodge and the upper slopes of Mount Whitehorn Front Side provide opportunities for wildlife viewing, learning programs and access to spectacular viewsapes; and

The summer use program on the upper edge of the subalpine zone is managed to enhance wildlife habitat effectiveness and limit potential impacts to resident grizzly bears through seasonal and daily time restrictions, and visitor management protocols. Learning opportunities such as interpretive walks or self-guided walking routes, or wildlife viewing from designated areas, will be focused on a designated footprint in the immediate vicinity of the Eagle Ridge Shoulder Lodge. Designated trails for independent or guided hikes on the east ridge of Whitehorn provide opportunities for more adventurous visitors to experience environments and viewsapes while minimizing potential for grizzly bear disturbance or habituation. Lodge architecture compliments the overall theme and building materials established by base area development as outlined by the ski areas architectural theme. While offering a spectacular viewscape for lodge visitors, the lodge itself will not be visibly apparent to offsite visitors, with both location and design blending building lines with terrain and treeline profile and selecting materials and finishes that blend with the natural environment.

5.2.2 Mount Whitehorn Front Side Winter Activities Guidelines

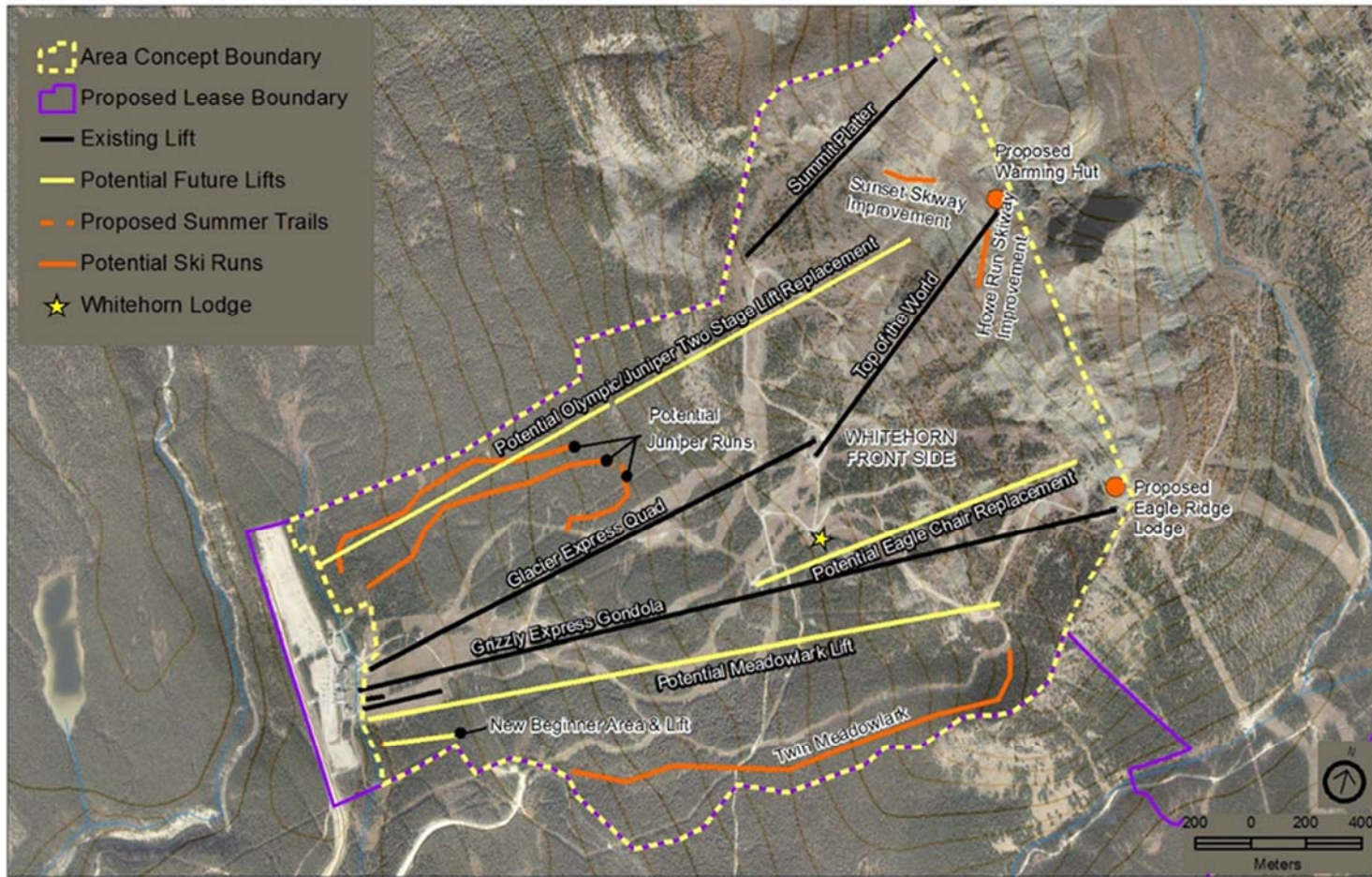
- The Whitehorn Front Side is primarily managed to accommodate moderate to high density snow riding experiences consistent with industry resort design and resort balance standards;
- Skiing, snowboarding or other snow riding competitions up to the international level may be staged on the front side subject to Superintendent approval and any special events review and permitting processes; and
- Winter visitor operating hours on Whitehorn Front Side will be consistent with the hours established for the base area (see also Section 5.1.2).

5.2.3 Mount Whitehorn Front Side Summer Activities Guidelines

- Outdoor summer visitor activities are focused on sightseeing, wildlife viewing, self-guided and guided interpretive hiking, natural and cultural heritage interpretation and education;



Map 8. Whitehorn Front Side Area Concept for the Lake Louise Ski Area





- Changes to lodge-based services and activities in support of the summer visitor use program may be considered outside of a Long-Range Plan but consistent with a Heritage Tourism Strategy approved as part of a Long-Range Plan; and
- Summer visitor operating hours on Whitehorn Front Side will be timed to integrate with the hours established for the base area ensuring that predictable wildlife habitat and movement security are maintained through low levels of visitor use (see also Section 5.1.3).

5.2.4 Mount Whitehorn Front Side Visitor and Operational Access Guidelines

- Summer visitor access to Whitehorn Front Side will be provided by a single designated lift;
- Summer use will be staged from the vicinity of a single lodge accessed from the designated lift top terminal;
- Self-guided summer visitor use outside of the designated lodge vicinity will be limited to mapped and designated trails on upper Whitehorn Mountain East Ridge consistent with section 5.2.5; and
- Wherever feasible, operational needs related to summer visitor use such as transport of staff, equipment or supplies will make use of the lift system designated for summer use.

5.2.5 Mount Whitehorn Front Side Facilities Guidelines

- Modification, renovation or replacement of the existing Whitehorn Lodge within the existing building footprint in support of winter or summer visitor use may be brought forward outside of a Long-Range Plan;
- Development of a new mid-mountain lodge of the same general size in the same general vicinity of the existing Whitehorn Lodge may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan subject to the general guidelines and conditions of outlined in Section 3 and 4. This Long-Range Plan proposal and associated permitting will include removal of the existing Whitehorn Lodge facility and rehabilitation of the site prior to occupation of a new mid-mountain lodge;
- To ensure clarity, Whitehorn Lodge may continue to be used for summer use until the time that an occupancy permit is issued for the use of a new lodge on Eagle Ridge shoulder. At that time summer use of Whitehorn Lodge (or its replacement), and the trails and surrounding area will cease;
- Development of a new lodge on the Eagle Ridge Shoulder may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan subject to:
 - The general guidelines and conditions outlined in Section 3 and 4, particularly the guidelines and conditions of Section 4.2;



- Building location and design blends with the profile of Eagle Ridge from key vantage points in the Lake Louise region. Building design will be consistent with the ski area architectural theme;
- Building design will demonstrate leadership standards by incorporating energy conservation and efficiency in the planning and development of the lodge;
- Building size will be considered in the commercial space growth limits;
- Design will take into account winter use patterns to avoid skier circulation and congestion problems. Summer visitor activities are to be restricted to the lodge and outside designated areas and trails;
- Winter operating hours of the lodge and conditions will be consistent with the General Site Guidelines, Section 4.1.
- The gondola will be the main supply channel for the lodge in summer and winter to limit transportation and operational related impacts.
- Development of a small winter use warming hut (see Section 4.4) with the primary purpose of providing washroom facilities and a shelter for skiers during inclement weather in the vicinity of the top terminal of the Top of the World Chairlift may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan subject to:
 - Building location and design blends with the profile of Whitehorn Ridge from key vantage points in the Lake Louise region. Hut design will be consistent with the ski area architectural theme;
 - Building materials and colours do not stand out against the natural background of the ridge;
 - Building utility supply, waste handling and wastewater disposal must meet required building codes and standards;
 - The hut must be sited to avoid skier circulation and congestion problems; and
 - Summer visitor use, or interpretation and educational use of the warming hut may be considered as part of a Long-Range Plan, but commercial food and beverage services in the summer will not be considered in order to limit the transportation and operational related impacts associated with maintaining, staffing and supplying a second location on the upper mountain.
- Summer hiking trails may be developed on either side, and along the ridge top of the East Ridge of Whitehorn Mountain between the Eagle Ridge Shoulder Lodge and the Top of the World upper lift terminal (see Map 5) to support summer hiking and interpretive programs under the following conditions:
 - A stacked loop Trail System Plan is brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan. Trails are limited to:



- A main trail along the ridge with lower parallel trails on each side of the ridge with connections to the main trail;
 - An out-and-back trail from the end of the looped system to the Top of the World Chairlift warming hut; and
 - A short barrier-free access spur trail from the vicinity of the Grizzly Gondola Top Terminal south along the ridge to a viewpoint.
- Trails are clearly marked, signed and constructed to keep hikers on designated trails;
 - Trails are generally located at or above treeline at a distance where visitor activity is unlikely to disturb areas frequently used by grizzly bears;
 - The trails are not visible to off-site visitors; and
 - Self-guided interpretive media is a key component of trail development.

5.2.6 Mount Whitehorn Front Side Runs, Glading and Vegetation Management Guidelines

- Additional beginner snow rider terrain can be considered as part of a Long-Range Plan within the existing developed area on low angle terrain between the existing Sunny T area and the old gondola lift line.
 - Maximum run width for this new terrain is 50m consistent with run width guidelines provided in Section 3.5.1;
 - New terrain in this area must be separated from the existing Sunny T area by a forest buffer that provides visual separation, wind break, and cover for moving wildlife.
- In-fill runs or glading within the developed area may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan consistent with the Run Improvement and Vegetation Management Strategy included in that plan (see also Section 3.5.3);
- To ensure clarity, development of a twinned run adjacent to the existing Meadowlark can be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan consistent with the general location and path identified in Map 8;
- Additional cleared runs or glades may be developed in the Juniper area as generally identified in Map 8 (see also Sections 3.2 Environmental Gains and Exceptions, and 3.3 Lease and Licences of Occupation); and
- Design of cleared runs and glades will avoid the removal of Whitebark pine or the exposure of Whitebark pine individuals to damage or destruction as a result of operational or snow rider use.



5.2.7 Mount Whitehorn Front Side Terrain Modification Guidelines

- Proposals for terrain modification are to be advanced consistent with the guidelines and conditions outlined in Section 4.6;
- To ensure clarity, improvements to Sunset and Home Run skiways may be advanced outside of a Long-Range Plan consistent with the guidelines and conditions of Section 4.6; and
- Grading of new runs will be minimized to that necessary to remove hazards such as rocks and stumps and to provide a safe skiing experience. Native ground cover and soils will be preserved to the extent possible and where not feasible, salvaged and used for reclamation.

5.2.8 Mount Whitehorn Front Side Snowmaking Guidelines

- Expansion or modification of snowmaking infrastructure to existing and new terrain as generally identified in Map 8 may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan and subject to the Water Management Strategy;
- Improvements to snowmaking systems that involve the elimination of on-hill fossil fuel generators may be considered outside of a Long-Range Plan consistent with the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*; and
- The seasonal period for snowmaking will be consistent with the operating conditions of the water permit.

5.2.9 Mount Whitehorn Front Side Ski Lifts

- Proposals for replacement or relocation of existing lifts or construction of new ski lifts as identified in a general way only in Map 8 are still subject to confirmation and will be advanced as part of a Long-Range Plan consistent with the guidelines and conditions outlined in Section 4.8 and the ecological management parameters of section 3.5.1.
 - Alternative lift configurations to those in Map 8 may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan proposal.
- Remove the infrastructure and restore the land associated with the old Olympic and Eagle Chairlifts, including towers and buildings as part of the development approval with the first new lift development for the Whitehorn Front Side put forward in a Long-Range Plan. Eagle Chair can be replaced in the same general location set out in Map 8.

5.3 Whitehorn Back Bowls Area Concept and Guidelines (Map 9, page 80)

5.3.1 Whitehorn Back Bowls Area Vision

The Whitehorn Back Bowls are the “steep and deep” expert and advanced, big mountain terrain at the ski area. On the back or east side of Whitehorn Mountain, the Back Bowls capture wind-blown snow from the front side and quality ski and boarding conditions can be found here days



after a snowfall and when fresh snow on other parts of the ski area has been skied out. A low density of lift development and greater amount advanced and expert terrain result in less intensive skier use that maintains the conditions that the advanced and expert skiers seek. Limited lift development means that adventurous skiers may have to work harder to access desired areas but the rewards are worth it in terms of the quality of experience. Lift reconfiguration or development of new lifts are planned to maintain the natural snow conditions and big mountain experience that the Back Bowls are renowned for; and

The Back Bowls are managed for winter use only. In keeping with the desired sense of adventure there are no lodge-based services. If desirable or needed, warming huts and washrooms are associated with bottom lift terminal locations on the backside. Less skilled skiers and snowboarders can access the Back Bowl experience through existing skiways and runs that take them safely from the top of the Back Bowls to the valley bottom. Even for these users the sense of the remote, adventurous or extreme is still paramount to the experience. The Back Bowls also include limited terrain on the west slopes of Richardson's Ridge where a lift provides access to Hidden Bowl. Maintenance of natural terrain, natural snow conditions, and snow farming are the preferred and dominant methods of managing ski conditions, supplemented only as necessary with limited grooming on skiways, snowmaking and terrain modification. Where needed to maintain safety and skiable terrain, glading and vegetation management mimic natural conditions and cleared ski runs through lower slope forested areas are not evident.

5.3.2 Whitehorn Back Bowls Winter Activities Guidelines

- Winter recreational activities in the Whitehorn Back Bowls are focused on natural condition, big mountain, snow riding opportunities;
- Winter recreation education opportunities such as avalanche or backcountry travel courses may take place in the Whitehorn Back Bowls area; and
- Special events that are focused on natural, big mountain snow and terrain conditions may be considered with the Superintendent's approval and subject to any Special Events review process.

5.3.3 Whitehorn Back Bowls Summer Activities Guidelines

- With the exception of formal hiking trails outlined in the Trail System Plan (Section 5.2.5), summer season visitor use will not be considered for the Whitehorn Back Bowls area.

5.3.4 Whitehorn Back Bowls Visitor and Operational Access Guidelines

- Visitor access to the Whitehorn Back Bowls will be via the winter lift system only;
- Winter operational access to the Whitehorn Back Bowls area will continue to be via existing skiways and groomed cat tracks; and
- Lift maintenance for new lifts in the Back Bowls area will take place over snow whenever feasible; new permanent access roads beyond Paradise lift base will not be considered.



5.3.5 Whitehorn Back Bowl Facilities Guidelines

- Development of a small winter use warming hut (see Section 4.4) with the primary purpose of providing washroom facilities and a shelter for skiers during inclement weather in the vicinity of either the bottom terminal of the existing Paradise chairlift or the proposed backside chairlift may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan subject to:
 - Hut design will be consistent with the ski area architectural theme;
 - Building materials and colours do not stand out against the natural background of the area;
 - Building utility supply, waste handling and wastewater disposal must meet required building codes and standards;
 - The hut must be sited to avoid skier circulation and congestion problems; and
 - There is no summer visitor use.

5.3.6 Whitehorn Back Bowls Runs, Glading and Vegetation Management Guidelines

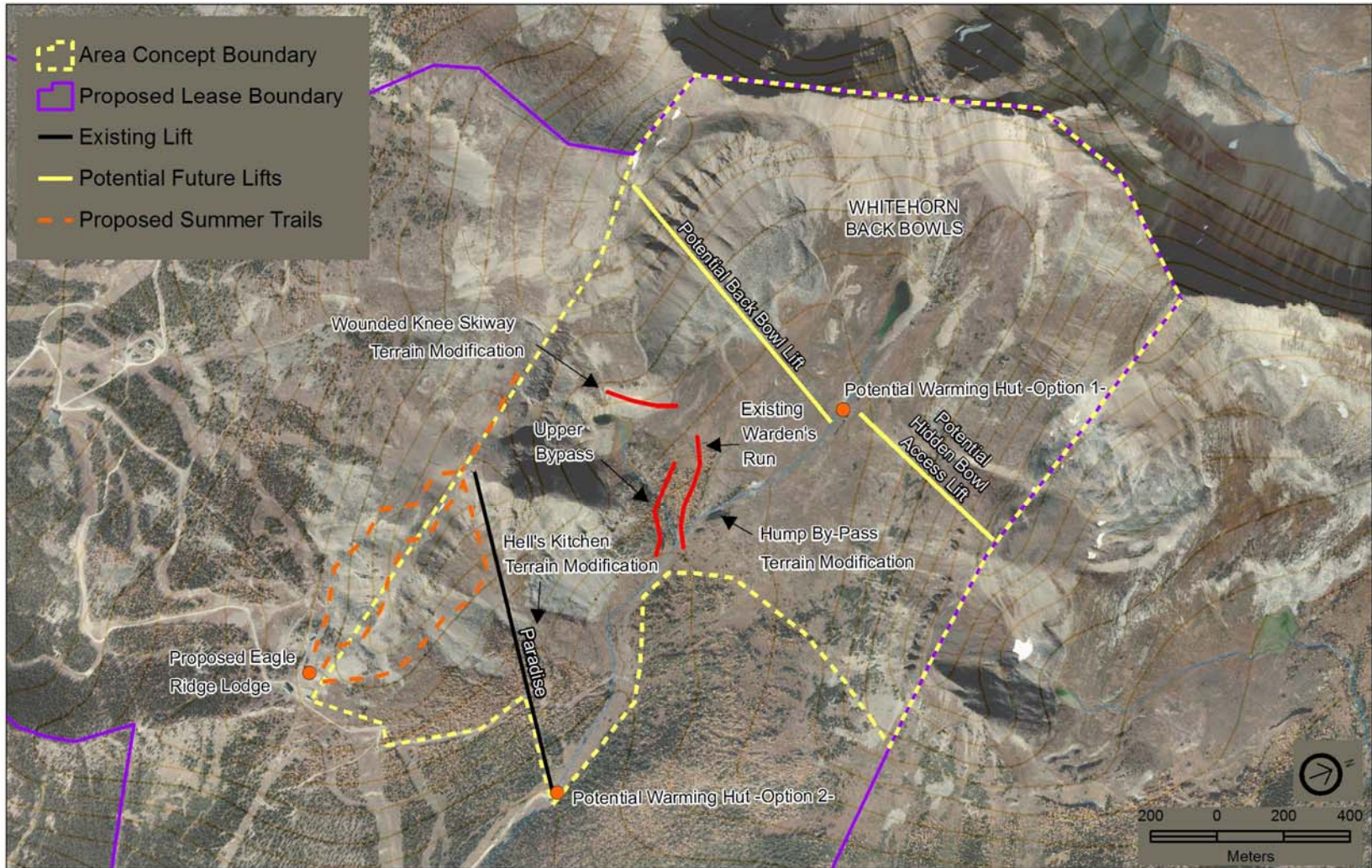
- Snow rider congestion through the area known as the Hump or Hump Bypass run may be relieved through run widening or reconfiguration that provides a safer and easier route for less skilled riders. Proposals will be advanced as part of a Long-Range Plan; and
- A new run or open glade may be developed on a flat bench above and parallel to the Hump Bypass to intercept and redirect skiers past the Hump and reduce congestion. Proposals will be advanced as part of a Long-Range Plan.

5.3.7 Whitehorn Back Bowls Terrain Modification Guidelines

- Improvements to Wounded Knee ski way may be advanced outside of a Long-Range Plan consistent with the guidelines and conditions of Section 5.6 consistent with the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*.
- Terrain modification including the use of bridging structures to reduce the need for snow farming or snow making in the “Hump” area may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan. Proposed modifications will be designed to:
 - Reduce run constriction and sudden transitions in slope that pose a rider safety hazard;
 - Provide effective bridging while protecting natural stream courses and beds; and
 - Maintain the ability of small wildlife to move up and down stream banks.



Map 9. Whitehorn Back Bowls Area Concept for Lake Louise Ski Area





- Terrain modification to address sudden slope transitions and low snow retention in the Hell's Kitchen area may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan:
 - Machine access to the work area will occur over snow; and
 - Construction of roads, terrain modification or vegetation clearing for the purpose of facilitating heavy machinery access to the Hell's Kitchen area will not be considered.
- Terrain modification to the Hump and Hell's Kitchen are considered to be exceptions to the *Ski Area Management Guidelines* and may be advanced as part of a Long-Range Plan once a new ski area lease has been put into place.

5.3.8 Whitehorn Back Bowls Snowmaking Guidelines

- Snow fencing and snow farming will be the primary means for building and maintaining snow cover in naturally low-snow retention areas in the Back Bowls;
- Snowmaking may be used on areas of low snow retention in the Back Bowls where temporary snow making equipment can be readily linked to the Front side system or
- Where water can be sustainably accessed from existing ponds. Proposals to be advanced as part of a Long-Range Plan and the Water Management Strategy; and
- Construction of permanent snowmaking infrastructure in the Back Bowls will not be considered.

5.3.9 Whitehorn Back Bowls Ski Lifts Guidelines

- A lift in the Back Bowls to return riders to the summit ridge of Whitehorn Mountain from the Pika flats may be brought forward in a Long-Range Plan as generally identified in Map 9; and
- A lift in the Back Bowls providing access from Pika Flats to Richardson's Ridge providing primary access to Hidden Bowl may be brought forward in a Long-Range Plan consistent with other requirements for Hidden Bowl (see also Section 5.6).

5.4 Temple Area Concept and Guidelines (Map 10, page 84)

5.4.1 Temple Area Vision

The Temple Area concept includes the established Larch and Ptarmigan areas, redevelopment of the former Prunepickers area to the north east of Temple Lodge, and new development on Richardson's Ridge. All of these areas fall into the existing lease and will be included in a reconfigured lease;

The Temple experience is centred around Temple Lodge itself, characterized by classic, rustic Rocky Mountain style, and a cozy atmosphere. The Larch and Ptarmigan pods address a key ski area need by providing variation in terrain for beginner and intermediate snow riders,



improving the overall balance of terrain consistent with industry standards. Ptarmigan and Larch also provide terrain options for advanced riders during periods of bad weather and poor visibility on the upper slopes of Whitehorn Mountain;

Redevelopment of the old Prunepickers ski runs and the development of new terrain on Richardson's Ridge provide additional terrain options for beginner and intermediate snow riders addressing a resort balance need. The Richardson's Ridge pod provides runs and open glades for beginner and low intermediate riders on sunny southwest slopes while open avalanche slopes and forest glades provide additional options for upper- intermediate and advanced riders on the northeast exposure. The Prunepickers area provides novice and beginner terrain options immediately adjacent to Temple Lodge reducing congestion on the Whitehorn Front Side and base areas while providing an experience of stepping into the wilds of Banff National Park that is suited to the limited experience of this key user group; and

For winter and summer backcountry users the main trail to the Skoki area goes past Temple Lodge. Facilities and infrastructure for skiers and snowboarders in this area are designed to reflect historic, traditional backcountry use and development.

5.4.2 Temple Area Winter Activities Guidelines

- The Temple Area pods are managed to accommodate moderate density snow riding experiences consistent with industry resort design and resort balance standards;
- Local and regional skiing, snowboarding or other snow riding competitions may be staged in the Temple Area subject to Superintendent approval and any special events review and permitting processes; and
- Winter visitor operating hours in the Temple Area will be operationally integrated with the hours established for the base area (see also Section 5.1.2).

5.4.3 Temple Area Summer Activities Guidelines

- Beyond hikers using the Skoki Trail, summer visitor use will not be considered for the Temple Area or Temple Lodge.

5.4.4 Temple Area Visitor and Operational Access Guidelines

- Winter visitor access and egress will continue to be via the ski area lift system;
- The Temple Road access, Whitehorn Lodge spur road, utility routes and the ski-out route will be removed from the lease and managed under a Licence of Occupation. The Temple ski-out running along the Temple Road access may be managed to provide optional snow rider egress from the Temple Area:
 - The ski area will continue to be responsible for roadway and skiway management, maintenance, repair and redevelopment; and
 - Modifications and enhancements to the Temple or Whitehorn spur road or ski-out may be brought forward outside of a Long-Range Plan if accompanied by



restoration and enhancements to Corral Creek fish and riparian habitat quality and connectivity.

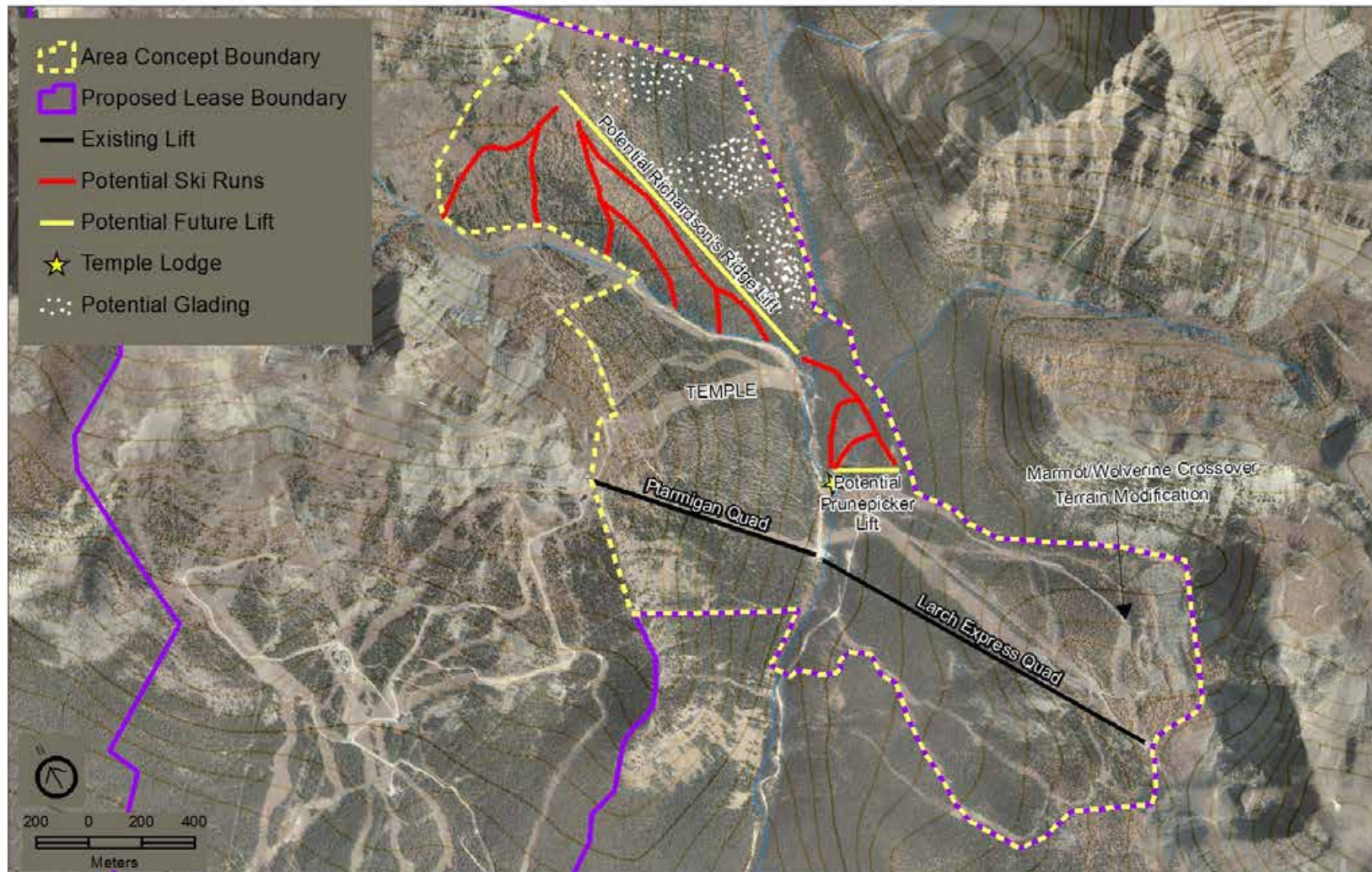
- The winter road for access and egress from Hidden Bowl will run through the lower northeast slopes of Richardson's Ridge pod above Corral Creek. The winter road will be managed consistent with the guidelines and conditions for Hidden Bowl (see also Section 5.6);
- Optional visitor shuttle systems may be brought forward outside of a Long-Range Plan to transport summer or winter Skoki Lodge and backcountry visitors through the ski area to the Skoki trailhead that:
 - Improve visitor experience; and
 - Reduce overall levels of disturbance through the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor.

5.4.5 Temple Area Facilities Guidelines

- Modification or renovation of Temple Lodge within the existing building footprint in support of winter visitor use may be brought forward outside of a Long-Range Plan consistent with the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*. Existing water permit withdrawal volumes cannot be exceeded;
- Expansion of Temple Lodge may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan consistent with maintaining resort balance and within commercial space growth limits;
- Any proposed expansion of Temple Lodge commercial space will include measures to eliminate direct on-demand water withdrawal from Corral Creek. As the first step to reducing on-demand withdrawal, enhanced water conservation and efficiency measures will be implemented;
- Alternative water sources and storage systems such as a reservoir, groundwater, infiltration galleries, snowmaking system or holding tanks could be used to eliminate direct on-demand water withdrawal from Corral Creek; and
- Operational facilities may be replaced, moved or consolidated outside of a Long-Range Plan to locations that improve protection and provide opportunity for enhancement of Corral Creek.



Map 10. Temple Area Concept for the Lake Louise Ski Area





5.4.6 Temple Area Runs, Glading and Vegetation Management Guidelines

- In-fill runs or glading in the Ptarmigan and Larch pods may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan consistent with the Run Improvement and Vegetation Management Strategy included in that plan (see also Section 3.5.3);
- New run development in the Prunepickers area will be generally consistent with the layout shown in Map 10;
- Richardson's Ridge runs, gladed areas and lifts will generally be consistent with the 1998 Richardson's Ridge Development Proposal:
 - New run development on the west side of the proposed Richardson's Ridge Chairlift will utilize a combination of cleared runs and open glades to achieve the desired experience for beginner and low-intermediate skiers while maintaining an appearance consistent with natural reference conditions; and
 - New run development on the east side of the Richardson's Ridge Chairlift will limit the development of new open runs and focus on designed glades consistent with the guidelines and conditions for Hidden Bowl (see also Section 5.6.6).
- Design of cleared runs and glades will avoid the removal of Whitebark pine or the exposure of Whitebark pine individuals to damage or destruction as a result of operational or snow rider use;
- New and modified run layouts for the Prunepickers and Richardson's Ridge pods will involve new or modified crossings of Corral, Pika and Wolverine Creeks. New crossings may be considered in conjunction with the overall improvement of existing crossings and streamside habitats. Crossing designs and habitat improvements will:
 - Maintain or restore in-stream and riparian habitat connectivity appropriate to key fish and wildlife species; and
 - Maintain or restore habitat parameters for shade, cover, stream temperature, and water quality.

5.4.7 Temple Area Terrain Modification Guidelines

- Proposals for terrain modification are to be advanced consistent with the guidelines and conditions outlined in Section 4.6 of the *Site Guidelines*;
- Potential major terrain modification at the Marmot/Wolverine crossover in the Larch pod would be considered a major terrain modification and an exception to the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*. This exception could be brought forward in a Long-Range Plan accompanied with substantial environment gains to Corral Creek habitat quality and connectivity;
- New or modified skiways may be considered below treeline where:



- They would reduce congestion and improve safety on collector trails such as Pika; and
- They would link areas of suitable terrain for beginner and intermediate riders.

5.4.8 Temple Area Snowmaking Guidelines

- New snowmaking infrastructure, using water sourced from the existing system within the approved water withdrawal limits, may be considered in the Temple Area as part of a Long-Range Plan;
- The development of new water sources, and snowmaking infrastructure that uses these sources in the Temple Area may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan subject to the following conditions:
 - Sufficient water quantity is not available from the existing system;
 - Water is not sourced on-demand from Corral Creek; and
 - Water and energy-efficient snowmaking technologies are employed.
- Development of a new water reservoir may be brought forward in a Long-Range Plan to store and manage snowmaking and potable water supplies. The terrain modification for this reservoir would be considered an exception under the Ski Area Management Guidelines. This exception could be brought forward in a Long-Range Plan accompanied with substantial environment gains to Corral Creek habitat quality and connectivity, or reductions in direct water withdrawal from Corral Creek; and
- The seasonal period for snowmaking will be consistent with the operating conditions of the water permit.

5.4.9 Temple Area Ski Lifts

- The top of a potential new Prunepickers lift is to be situated in the vicinity of the old Prunepickers lift top. The objective is to allow enough gradient for skiers to traverse from the top of the Prunepickers lift to the base terminal of the Richardson's Ridge Chairlift by the most direct route; and
- New lifts may be considered for the Prunepickers and Richardson's Ridge pods generally consistent with the conceptual layout shown in Map 10.

5.5 West Bowl Area Concept and Guidelines (Map 11, page 89)

5.5.1 West Bowl Area Vision

Located on the northwest aspect of Mount Whitehorn, West Bowl provides an opportunity for adventurous skiers and snowboarders to access natural, ungroomed snow conditions when snow and avalanche conditions are favourable while remaining close to the developed ski area. Ski area management in West Bowl is minimal, reflecting the desired adventure experience of stepping into the wild and ensuring that sensitive alpine vegetation and Whitebark pine



communities persist, and limits intrusion into the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor. Ski patrol and basic avalanche control work do take place, but users are made aware of heightened hazard levels and the need for proper avalanche equipment and training. Visitor experience and education are enhanced through programs such as backcountry travel or avalanche safety courses. Physical development in the West Bowl area is limited to fencing to control access and small access structures such as rails or steps, or minor terrain modification such as creating rock steps to facilitate safe foot access to the bowl from the ridge top access point; and

Egress from West Bowl is attained by traversing or climbing back to the south shoulder of the bowl and descending into the lower slopes of Outer Limits ski run, or alternatively by descending through steep chutes to an egress trail that returns to the developed ski runs above the base area. The egress trail is located and designed, including vegetation management, rope fencing, and information signage, to facilitate convenient egress and emergency access while discouraging skiers from descending into the Whitehorn Wildlife Corridor below.

5.5.2 West Bowl Winter Visitor Activity Guidelines

- Winter recreational activities in West Bowl will be limited to sidecountry snow riding or ski/snowshoe touring within the Licence of Occupation area;
- Skiers accessing West Bowl from the Whitehorn ridge top should be equipped with avalanche safety and rescue equipment such as beacons, probes and shovels;
- Winter recreation education opportunities such as avalanche or backcountry travel courses may take place in West Bowl; and
- Special events that are focused on backcountry/sidecountry riding and rely on backcountry snow and terrain conditions may be considered subject to Superintendent approval.

5.5.3 West Bowl Summer Visitor Activity Guidelines

- Summer visitor use will not be considered for the West Bowl area.

5.5.4 West Bowl Visitor and Operational Access Guidelines

- The Ski Area will provide a West Bowl Controlled Sidecountry Plan as part of a Long-Range Plan demonstrating how the ski area will ensure the West Bowl exception parameters (Section 3.2.2) are achieved. The Sidecountry Plan will also address:
 - Fencing of West Bowl including controlled access into West Bowl through specific entry points; and
 - Sign plan with equipment requirements, safety, hazard, ability level, egress, and other relevant information for skiers entering West Bowl. A perimeter fence sign plan for skiers accessing out-of-bounds, off-lease backcountry areas to inform them that they are leaving the managed ski area and that there is no maintained egress, no avalanche control, no safety patrols and that they must be self-reliant and familiar with backcountry travel.



- Egress from the lower West Bowl area will be by the designated and maintained egress trail;
- Development of a winter-only egress trail along the lower boundary of the West Bowl area will be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan including:
 - Egress trail design must take advantage of natural terrain features to limit the extent of terrain modification required;
 - Significant distances of linear cut and fill construction will not be considered; and
 - In keeping with the Area Concept, egress trail width will be limited to that necessary to provide safe skier egress and to allow grooming from the base area to access the area for rescue operations. The necessity for a groomed egress trail, its width and length will be brought forward in a Long-Range Plan. Tree clearing will be limited to the minimum required to allow for the safe passage of a snow machine.

5.5.5 West Bowl Facility Guidelines

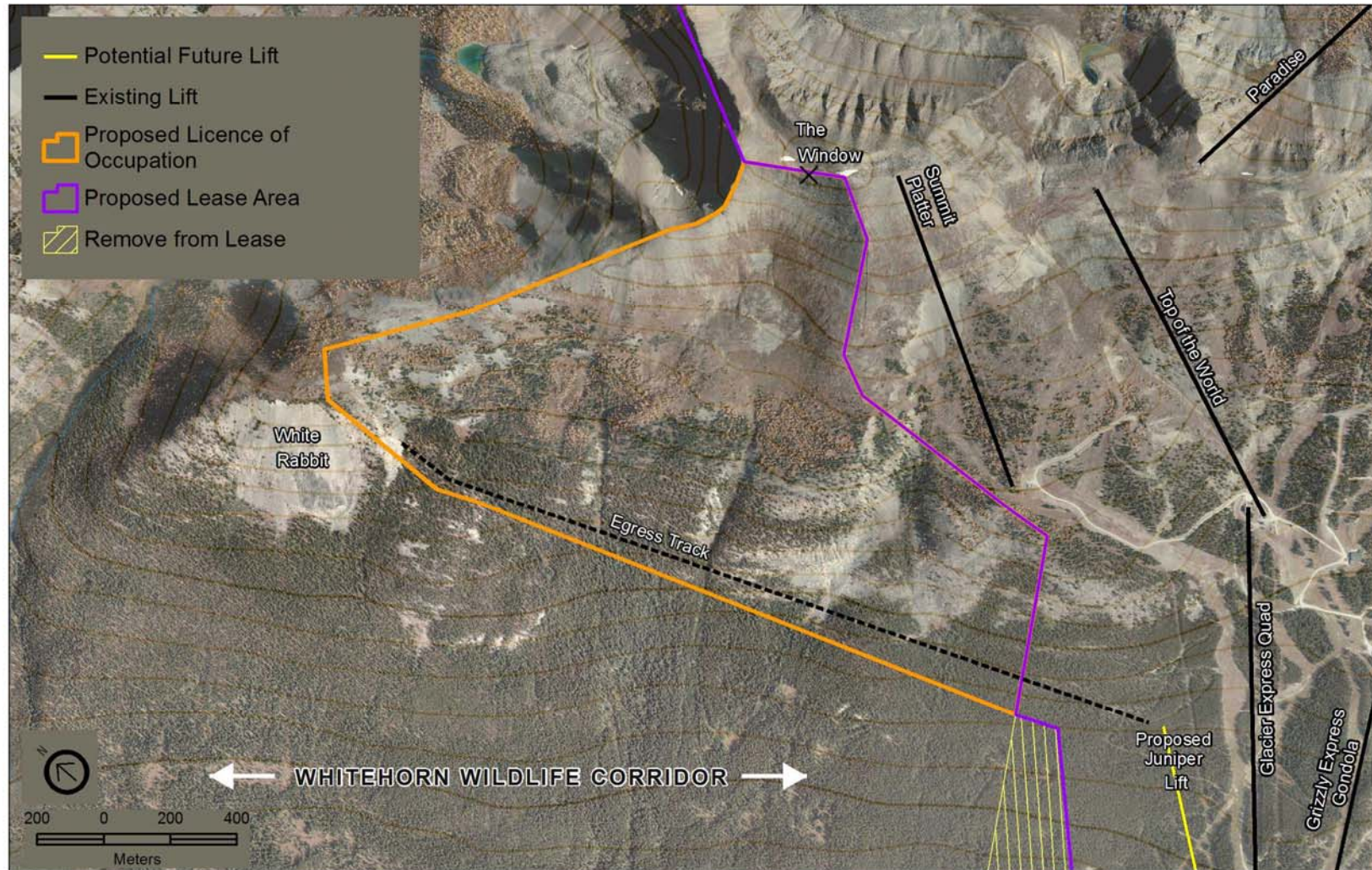
- Small removable structures such as steps or railings, and minor terrain manipulation may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan to facilitate safe rider foot access from the controlled entry points through rocky areas into upper West Bowl. No skiway construction is allowed; and
- No other facilities will be considered in the West Bowl area unless required for environmental protection or management.

5.5.6 West Bowl Runs, Glading and Vegetation Management Guidelines

- Clearing of ski runs will not be considered in the West Bowl area;
- Whitebark pine will not be removed or modified to facilitate snow riding in the West Bowl area; routine vegetation management activities associated with Whitebark pine such as hazard management or disease will be managed in accordance with established Parks Canada best management practices;
- Routine removal of other small trees or branches may take place as part of regular operations to maintain naturally occurring ski lines or glades in upper subalpine areas;
- Selective glading may be considered through a Long-Range Plan in lower subalpine areas, in and adjacent to natural egress chutes, to facilitate safe and clear access to the egress trail; and
- Any glading proposals will be consistent with the local fire management strategies and will mimic naturally occurring vegetation conditions using local reference locations.



Map 11: West Bowl





5.5.7 West Bowl Terrain Modification Guidelines

- Other than the access and egress trail as noted in 5.5.4, terrain modification will be limited to the removal or modification of clear safety hazards in confined locations such as ridge tops or gullies.

5.5.8 West Bowl Snowmaking Guidelines

- Snowmaking will not be considered in West Bowl or along the egress trail except the portion of trail within the lease approaching the Juniper area; and
- The use of seasonal snow fencing to ensure rider safety and to protect soils and vegetation may be considered in exposed locations.

5.5.9 West Bowl Ski Lift Guidelines

- The development of ski lifts in the West Bowl area, or that provide direct lift access to the West Bowl, area will not be considered.

5.6 Hidden Bowl Area Concept and Guidelines (Map 12, page 93)

5.6.1 Hidden Bowl Area Vision

Hidden Bowl provides a back-bowl snow riding experience suited for intermediate to advanced skiers and snowboarders who are seeking natural snow and terrain conditions. Hidden Bowl serves as a step into the wild, a signature experience on the edge of the backcountry where visitor perceptions and the snow riding experience are not influenced by modified terrain, roads, commercial services, snowmaking or groomed runs and skiways. One ski lift provides access to the top of Richardson's Ridge from the Whitehorn side with another lift to facilitate low-density lift skiing in Hidden Bowl. A modest warming hut provides rustic shelter from the elements. A winter only snow machine/ski-out service trail provides the main egress for skiers and for ski area staff and operational access;

The Hidden Bowl area is adjacent to the main trail to the Skoki Valley and the Skoki Lodge National Historic Site, one of the parks most popular winter and summer backcountry areas. Hidden Lake and Corral Creek adjacent to the Hidden Bowl Licence of Occupation serve as important Westslope cutthroat trout habitat and the backside of Hidden Lake may be important habitat for mountain goats at certain times of the year. Facilities, runs and glades in Hidden Bowl are designed and managed in such a way that spectacular views, wildlife and wilderness values in and adjacent to the area are maintained; and

Visitor education and awareness is a prominent and important element of the Hidden Bowl experience. As a signature experience on the edge-of-park wilderness, visitors are made aware of habitat needs for Westslope cutthroat trout, Mountain goat, Mountain caribou and other wildlife. Visitor appreciation and support is garnered through interpretive messaging, by encouraging good personal stewardship, and also by communicating how the area is designed and managed to protect ecological and visitor values. Snow riders leaving Hidden Bowl will have had great skiing or snowboarding experiences and will also leave with a deepened awareness of and appreciation for their national park and wilderness values.



5.6.2 Hidden Bowl Winter Visitor Activity Guidelines

- Winter recreational activities in Hidden Bowl will be limited to natural condition, snow riding opportunities within the Licence of Occupation;
- Winter recreation education opportunities such as avalanche or backcountry travel courses may take place in Hidden Bowl;
- Special events that are focused on backcountry/sidecountry riding and rely on backcountry snow and terrain conditions may be considered within the Licence of Occupation with Superintendent approval subject to conditions including:
 - Small scale – no more than 150 participants including support staff/volunteers;
 - One to two days in duration – daytime only; and
 - No physical use, or visual or auditory disturbance of lands outside the Licence of Occupation.

5.6.3 Hidden Bowl Summer Visitor Activity Guidelines

- Summer visitor use will not be considered for the Hidden Bowl area beyond current hiking and camping in the vicinity.

5.6.4 Hidden Bowl Visitor and Operational Access Guidelines

- Visitor egress, operational access, and seasonal maintenance to Hidden Bowl will be over snow via the designated and maintained Corral slides winter only service trail;
- The Corral Slides winter only service trail will be located and designed so that:
 - Where feasible, and where it provides the best overall environmental protection, a 100m buffer is maintained between the edge of the winter service trail disturbed area and the high water mark of Corral Creek;
 - The 100m buffer may be less where maintaining a five to 10 per cent descent grade is not feasible, or where the location of the service trail would result in significant removal of forest cover or terrain modification;
 - In the event that the 100m buffer distance cannot be maintained, the winter only service trail will be located and/or designed to prevent sedimentation and to protect natural riparian vegetation cover so that shade, cover and temperature conditions in Corral Creek are not affected;
 - A 30m buffer is maintained between the edge of the disturbed area for the service trail and the edge of any wetlands or fens; and
 - Surface and subsurface flows from saturated soils, springs and seasonal watercourses continue to feed Corral Creek at natural rates and timing.



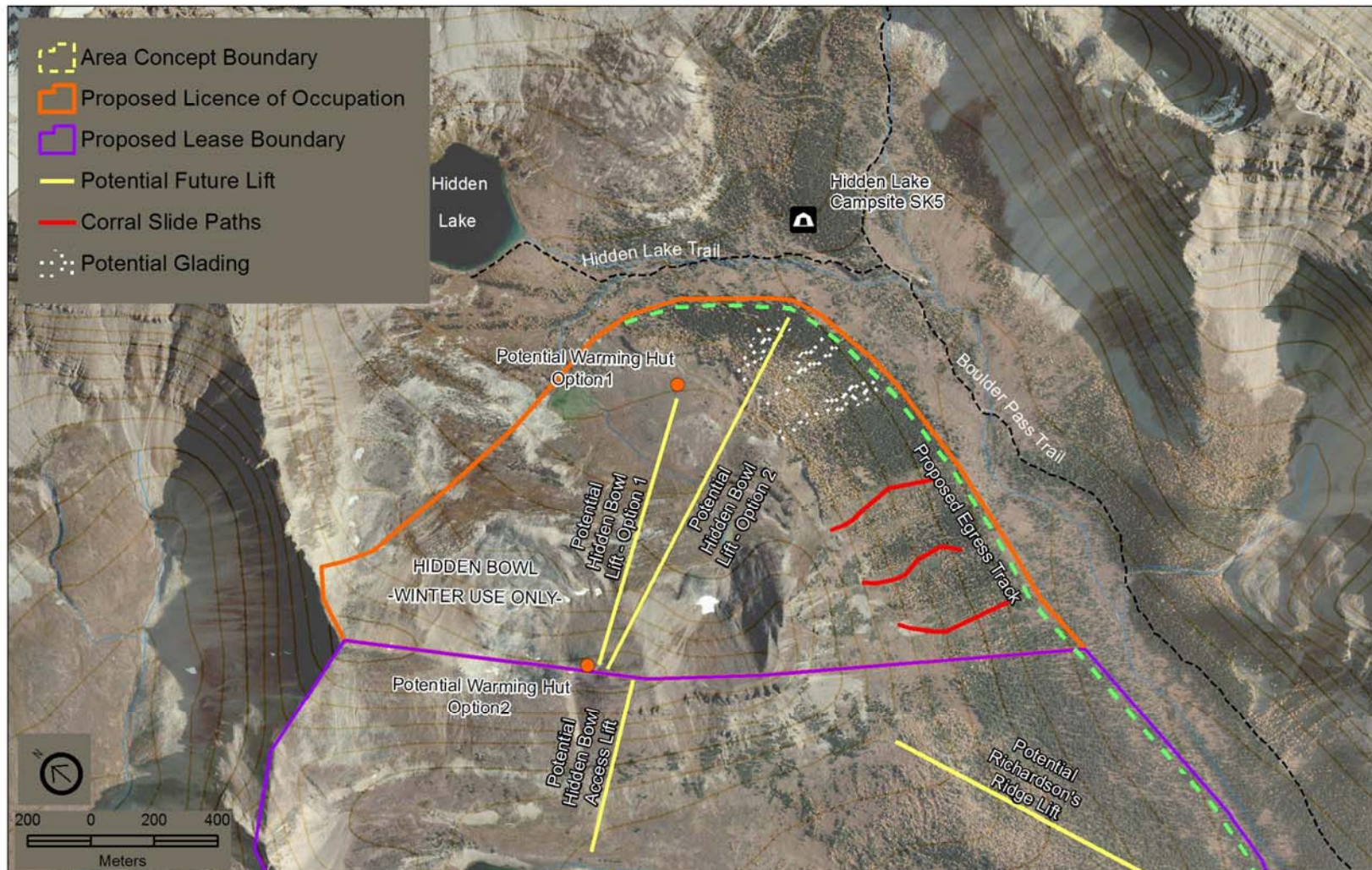
- The development of summer service roads or trails from the leased area to Hidden Bowl will not be considered. Buried or overhead utility lines to service the Hidden Bowl Lift and bottom lift facilities such as the terminal via the Corral Creek Valley will not be allowed. Electrical power for the Hidden Bowl lift is to be run in conjunction with the Hidden Bowl access lift on the front side of Richardson's Ridge;
- Routine maintenance activities will occur over snow or via the lifts;
- Parks Canada and the Lake Louise Ski Area will review the Skoki winter trail(s) within the ski area to the Halfway Hut and investigate options to reroute or consolidate them to improve visitor experience and safety;
- Parks Canada and the Lake Louise Ski Area will review the Skoki summer trail within the ski area to the Halfway Hut and investigate options to reroute it to improve visitor experience and safety;
- Hidden Bowl boundaries will be clearly marked and signed with safety, access and egress and environmental protection information; and
- Any visitors choosing to access backcountry areas from Hidden Bowl, or otherwise leave the area boundary, will be made aware they are leaving the managed ski area, that there is no maintained egress, and that they must be equipped for backcountry travel and self-reliant.

5.6.5 Hidden Bowl Facility Guidelines

- Development of one winter use Warming Hut (see Section 4.4) with the primary purpose of providing washroom facilities and a shelter for skiers during inclement weather in the vicinity of either the bottom or top terminal of the Hidden Bowl Chairlift may be brought forward as part of a Long-Range Plan subject to:
 - Hut design will be consistent with the ski area architectural theme;
 - Building materials and colours do not stand out against the natural background of the hut's setting;
 - Building utility supply, waste handling and wastewater disposal must meet required building codes and standards;
 - The hut must be sited to avoid skier circulation and congestion problems;
 - There is no summer visitor use;
 - For the lower terminal hut location option, a 100m buffer can be maintained between the footprint of the hut and Corral Creek. For the other lower terminal hut location option a 30m buffer can be maintained between the hut and the tarn in Hidden Bowl flats (see also Section 5.6.9 ski lifts); and



Map 12. Hidden Bowl Area Concept for the Lake Louise Ski Area



- For the upper terminal location option, the hut can be a stand-alone facility or incorporated with the upper lift terminal. A stand-alone building must be sited so it does not break the ridge profile and is not visible from the valleys.

5.6.6 Hidden Bowl Runs, Glading and Vegetation Management Guidelines

- Clearing of open ski runs will be limited to existing natural avalanche paths to minimize reduction of forest cover, limit potential erosion and sedimentation issues, and maintain natural appearances for off-site visitors;
- Glades may be developed descending through forest cover from Hidden Bowl alpine to the Corral Creek egress route;
- Where glades are developed the design will mimic local patterns in native forest cover in order to maintain forest cover within a natural range of variation, maintain natural appearances, and limit the potential for erosion and sedimentation issues;
- Cleared avalanche path runs and glades will be spaced so as to maintain a range of forest cover conditions in support of a variety of expected wildlife species habitat;
- Grading of cleared avalanche path runs or glades will not be considered; native vegetation ground cover will be maintained or restored; and
- Avalanche control will be managed in such a way that effects of control do not extend below the winter access service trail or adversely affect the function of riparian buffers.

5.6.7 Hidden Bowl Terrain Modification Guidelines

- Terrain modification in ski terrain will be limited to the removal or modification of clear safety hazards in confined locations such as ridge tops or gullies, or in exposed locations; and
- Terrain modification associated with Corral Creek winter only service trail, lifts and warming hut will be minimized through design and location to not exceed that necessary to support the construction of appropriate foundations.

5.6.8 Hidden Bowl Snowmaking Guidelines

- Snowmaking will not be considered in Hidden Bowl or along the Corral Creek winter road except for the portion of trail within the lease; and
- The use of seasonal snow fencing to ensure rider safety and to protect soils and vegetation may be considered in exposed locations.

5.6.9 Hidden Bowl Ski Lift Guidelines

- A ski lift may be considered in Hidden Bowl to return skiers to the top of Richardson's Ridge;

- To limit potential impacts of lift base development and use on Corral Creek and other aquatic habitat, the base for a Hidden Bowl lift terminal will be located:
 - A minimum of 30m from the small lake in Hidden Bowl flats;
 - A minimum of 100m from Corral Creek; and
 - Above the egress trail.
- The lift top terminal will be located in central Richardson's Ridge consistent with the general area outlined in Map 12; lift top terminals will be sited to minimize visual impacts from Skoki Trail and Hidden Lake backcountry campground.

6 Long-Range Planning

6.1 Projects in advance of Long-Range Plans

- Following the completion of *Site Guidelines*, and in recognition that it will take time to prepare a Long-Range Plan, Parks Canada may consider additional projects if they are entirely within the existing developed area, do not have potential for significant cumulative effects, are not linked to other projects and Long-Range Plan decisions and do not result in incremental expansion. The following types of projects may be considered:
 - Replacement of existing ski lifts;
 - Parking lot improvements within the existing footprint;
 - Limited terrain modification of existing ski runs; and
 - Improvements to snowmaking infrastructure to support existing ski runs currently covered by snowmaking; water withdrawal would need to remain within existing water permit limits.

(Ski Area Management Guidelines, Minister of Environment, 2006, page 8)

- Initiatives that are consistent with these criteria are identified throughout the *Site Guidelines*. All initiatives that do not meet these criteria, unless specifically noted otherwise, will need to be advanced through a Long-Range Plan.

6.2 Long-Range Planning Process

- Long-Range Plans are prepared by the ski area describing specific projects and initiatives, consistent with the approved *Lake Louise Ski Area Site Guidelines for Development and Use* that they want to undertake in a specified time period. Long-Range Plans are evaluated in a manner and level of detail consistent with standard development review processes for the mountain parks and are subject to the application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)* and public review. The *Site*

Guidelines call for the Lake Louise Ski Area to complete a number of requirements prior to submission of their first or subsequent Long-Range Plans;

- Unless otherwise specified, Long-Range Plan approved projects that are submitted with a sufficient level of detail may proceed to the permitting process without further development review or environmental impact analysis. Long-Range Plan projects that are not accompanied with a sufficient level of detail to afford detailed technical or public review, or that do not effectively identify and mitigate project level environmental effects, may be subject to additional development review and environmental impact analysis requirements. Any additional development, public or environmental review requirements will be specified as part of Long-Range Plan decisions and environmental impact analysis determinations;
- Stakeholder and public consultation are an important part of the Long-Range Plan preparation process. The following outlines the key steps and who is responsible for their completion in preparing a Long-Range Plan:
 - Determine scope of projects to be included in the Long-Range Plan ensuring resort balance is achieved (Parks Canada, Lake Louise Ski Area);
 - Prepare *Environmental Impact Analysis* terms of reference (Parks Canada based on *Site Guidelines Strategic Environmental Assessment* and scope of projects to be included in the Long-Range Plan);
 - Prepare draft Long-Range Plan (Lake Louise Ski Area);
 - Prepare draft Environmental Impact Analysis (Lake Louise Ski Area);
 - Undertake public consultation and review of the draft Long-Range Plan (Lake Louise Ski Area);
 - Undertake public consultation and review of the draft Environmental Impact Analysis (Parks Canada);
 - Revisions to Long-Range Plan and Environmental Impact Analysis (Lake Louise Ski Area);
 - Environmental Impact Analysis determination (Parks Canada);
 - Recommendations to Minister on the Long-Range Plan determination (Parks Canada); and
 - Minister decision to approve or not approve the Long-Range Plan.

7 Monitoring

Long-Range Plans, environmental assessments, best management practices and Environmental Management System and other required strategies will determine specific monitoring requirements.

Follow-up requirements to ensure mitigations are successful will be identified as part of Long-Range Plans and the associated environmental assessment, as well as the Strategic Environmental Assessment and annual business licensing.

8 Strategic Environmental Assessment Summary

Environmental considerations influenced the *Ski Area Management Guidelines* and will influence the *Lake Louise Ski Area Site Guidelines for Development and Use*. Parks Canada completed a *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)* of the *Site Guidelines* to examine their implications and to help decision-makers understand their potential consequences. Because of the scale of the ski areas operation and the complexity of the potential issues, the *SEA* was undertaken at a significant level of detail and rigour and subjected to independent scientific review. As it is a companion document to the *Site Guidelines*, key aspects of the *SEA* were incorporated into the *Site Guidelines*. The *SEA* is neither the first nor the last step in the environmental analysis of the ski area. It falls between a very broad overview and specific assessments for projects brought forward in the Long-Range Plan.

The *SEA* concludes that ski area development that proceeds in accordance with the parameters of the *Site Guidelines* and that responds to the planning and information requirements of the *SEA* is expected to achieve outcomes for ecological integrity, cultural resources, visitor experience and infrastructure capacity consistent with direction in the *Ski Area Management Guidelines* and the park management plan.

The *SEA* identifies a number of mitigations and planning/information requirements that must be addressed in future long-range plans proposals and environmental assessments. While the majority of these are reflected in the *Site Guidelines*, the ski area will need to use the *SEA* in tandem with the *Site Guidelines* in preparing its proposals.

Appendix One - Ski Area Management Guidelines

Introduction

Downhill skiing has a long history in Canada's national parks. The Banff Ski Club was formed in 1917 and the first commercial ski facility began operations in 1934. Downhill skiing has since become a cornerstone of winter tourism in the Rocky Mountain national parks. Banff and Jasper National Parks of Canada are international ski destinations attracting hundreds of thousands of skiers each year. Due to the pressures placed on alpine and sub-alpine environments, the 2000 *Canada National Parks Act* prohibits developing new commercial ski areas inside the national parks.

The nature of skiing and skier expectations, as well as national parks policies have changed considerably since the initial Long-Range Plans were developed for the Lake Louise, Sunshine Village, Mount Norquay and Marmot Basin ski areas in the 1980s. In order for these areas to operate in a manner that will not impair the ecological integrity of the parks and assist them to remain competitive, a clear and consistent approach to managing ski areas is required. Ski Area Guidelines were established in 2000 to guide the development of new Long-Range Plans. In order to facilitate improvements to ecological integrity, reflect the full scope of Parks Canada's mandate and address the concerns of communities, ski areas, tourism associations and environmental groups, some refinements to the guidelines are necessary. These refinements reflect the original intent of the guidelines and will be the basis for managing ski areas in the mountain national parks.

Basic Approach

The following outlines the broad approach that will be taken to manage the mountain national park ski areas:

- Parks Canada's fundamental responsibilities are protecting heritage resources, facilitating opportunities for public education and memorable visitor experiences. As part of this integrated mandate, the *Canada National Parks Act* requires that the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity will be the first priority when considering all aspects of the management of parks. These responsibilities will form the foundation for decisions.
- Parks Canada's primary goal for the management of ski areas is to achieve long term land use certainty that:
 - ensures ecological integrity will be maintained or restored;
 - contributes to facilitating memorable national park visitor experiences and educational opportunities; and

- provides ski area operators with clear parameters for business planning in support of an economically healthy operation.
- To address the needs of the ski areas and Parks Canada, a collaborative approach is desired.
- Growth Limits and parameters to guide development and operations have been established for communities and outlying commercial accommodation to ensure ecological integrity and reinforce their location in a national park. Ski areas will be treated in a similar manner.
- The requirements of the *Canada National Parks Act*, *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and the *Species at Risk Act* will be met.
- The 2000 Ski Area Guidelines recognized that existing Long-Range Plans were out of date. They identified the need to have new plans completed by 2002. These plans are overdue. New development will be addressed through new Long-Range Plans. In advance of new plans, development will be restricted and may only be considered under the conditions outlined in these guidelines.
- Ski Area Site Guidelines will be approved by the CEO of the Parks Canada Agency. Ski Area Long-Range Plans will be approved by the Minister responsible for the Parks Canada Agency.
- Parks Canada will work with ski areas to advance Long-Range Plans in a timely manner. Regulatory options to increase certainty in terms of planning and development processes and acceptable time frames for the preparation of Long- Range Plans will be considered.
- Parks Canada will seek to work together with ski areas, communities, the tourism industry and agencies to support a vibrant winter experience.

Principles to Guide New Long Range Plans

The following principles will guide the preparation of Long-Range Plans:

- The approach taken to manage growth and the preparation of Site Guidelines and Long-Range Plans at ski areas will be similar to that taken for communities and outlying commercial accommodation.
- Inside the existing Developed Area, new development can be considered where potential ecological impacts can be mitigated.
- Outside the existing Developed Area, new development can be considered if there is a Substantial Environmental Gain within or adjacent to the leasehold.
- Ski areas will contribute to a unique, memorable national park experience.

- Ski areas will promote public appreciation and understanding of the heritage values of the park and world heritage site and local conservation initiatives.
- Ski areas will be leaders in the application of environmental management, stewardship and best practices.

Application of Principles

The following information outlines how the principles will be applied.

Existing Developed Area

- The existing Developed Area represents the area modified for skiing or other uses within the leasehold through the construction of physical works, or through clearing/removal of trees and other vegetation, landscaping, terrain modification or other activity associated with ski area operation. It includes ski runs, lift lines, parking areas, commercial buildings, operational buildings and forested areas between ski runs. It does not include Undeveloped Areas, Un-serviced Terrain or Un-skied Terrain. The perimeter of the Developed Area will be determined by:
 - the top terminal of the upper-most lifts;
 - the outer limits of formally cut ski runs/gladed areas or approved Ski Terrain; and
 - the perimeter of base/parking, staging and operational areas.
- Within the Developed Area, improvements to services and facilities can be considered. Additional infill ski runs, glading, run widening and parking can be considered. However, to ensure ecological integrity and address aesthetic issues, modification of physical terrain and forest cover will be carefully managed. Site Guidelines will identify ecological management parameters to ensure ecosystem functioning is maintained and that sensitive areas are protected. At a minimum, this will include maximum run width, minimum distance between runs, maximum number of new runs and the prohibition of development in sensitive areas. Other parameters will be determined on a ski area by ski area basis. The Long-Range Plan will include a run improvement and vegetation management strategy that ensures:
 - a sustainable alpine and forest ecosystem;
 - preventing the spread of exotic non-native invasive plants and their elimination where practical;
 - non-native species are not introduced;
 - the reclamation of degraded landscapes, no longer in use, to natural conditions;
 - wildfire facility protection;

- the maintenance and where practical the enhancement of wildlife habitat and movement in all seasons;
 - the protection of habitat for any species at risk;
 - minimizing water erosion; and
 - the maintenance and where practical the enhancement of the health of aquatic ecosystems.
- Capacity:
 - The capacity of ski areas can increase but development will be permanently capped through Site Guidelines.
 - Growth Limits will be established for Ski Terrain, the Developed Area and commercial buildings. These limits will represent build out.
 - Within the developed area and the context of ensuring ecosystem functioning and terrain limitations, the balancing of ski area components can be considered. These components are Ski Terrain, commercial buildings, out-of-base lift capacity, total lift capacity and parking (including transportation shuttle systems).
 - In determining Growth Limits and balancing requirements of individual ski area components, Parks Canada may seek the advice of external experts.
 - Ski area development to the maximum Growth Limits can be considered if the principles and conditions set out in the approved Site Guidelines and Long-Range Plans are met.
 - Within the Developed Area the following can be considered:
 - lift replacement, upgrade, realignment and new lifts;
 - increase in day lodge and commercial building size;
 - relocation and replacement of existing lodges and facilities; and
 - new warming huts and washroom facilities.
 - Development of new on-hill accommodation and the expansion of the number of rooms of Sunshine's existing hotel will not be permitted. New facilities, including day lodges, will not be permitted. New employee housing, except those required for security reasons, will be provided in the near-by communities.
 - The Goat's Eye Day Lodge proposal was at an advanced stage of review when the 2000 Ski Area Guidelines were announced. The guidelines indicated the Goat's Eye Day Lodge

would be subject to a comprehensive study as required under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. Accordingly, a proposal for the facility can be considered as part of a Long-Range Plan or advanced outside of the plan.

- Use of mass transit will be the primary means to address parking issues. Parking lot reconfiguration and expansion within the existing Developed Area can be considered within terrain and ecological limitations. New skiing parking nodes will be prohibited. Use of existing parking lots off-site can be considered, preferably in the communities, in order to support shuttle bus services.
- Significant terrain modification will be prohibited. No new alpine ski ways will be permitted. Existing ski ways can be improved to address skier safety, terrain stability and aesthetic issues. Changes must minimize ground disturbances, address aesthetic impacts and be reversible.
- Expansion, modification or introduction of snowmaking can be considered. Long-term decisions on snowmaking will be made in the long range planning process. Where applicable, long-term water withdrawal limits and protocols will be established to ensure minimum stream flows are maintained and a healthy aquatic environment. Limits will be subject to review and adjustment based on the hydrological information available at the time the application for a water permit is sought. Ongoing monitoring will be required. Snowmaking operations will be addressed as part of the Best Management Practices component of the Long- Range Plan.
- Infrastructure (eg. water, sewer, power) capacity increase can be considered.
- Infrastructure must have sufficient capacity and meet environmental standards before ski area growth can take place.
- Exceptions to these Guidelines for facilities, parking, terrain modification limitations and adjustments to the perimeter of the Developed Area can be considered if there are Substantial Environmental Gains. Exceptions will not be considered for on-hill accommodation, Growth Limits, water permits and infrastructure requirements.

Summer Use

Existing and potential summer use of ski areas presents ecological challenges beyond those of winter operations. There are more and different wildlife species that utilize ski area slopes in summer than in winter including sensitive species such as grizzly bears, woodland caribou, mountain goat, lynx and wolverine. Wildlife are particularly vulnerable during the spring and early summer because of sensitive life cycle requirements such as nesting and rearing newborn. In addition, several of the ski areas have important wildlife routes adjacent to the leaseholds or transecting them that are essential to the long-term health of wildlife populations.

The summer season in the parks is the busiest visitor season. To address park ecological issues a range of visitor experience and ecological strategies have been developed for each park. While

the number of summer users at ski areas will likely be substantially lower at most ski areas than the winter season, the ecological impacts at both the ski area and the broader park ecosystem are potentially greater.

The ecological circumstances, sensitivities and adjacent land use strategies are different at each ski area. For these reasons ski areas will be managed on a ski area by ski area basis and proposals for changes in summer use or new initiatives will only be considered where it can be clearly demonstrated that ecological issues can be successfully addressed. A precautionary approach will be applied to decisions on summer use.

In order to consider new summer use and changes to existing summer use, proposals must demonstrate that the following criteria will be met:

- No significant increase in wildlife-human conflict, wildlife habituation, displacement, disturbance or in human caused wildlife mortality.
- Wildlife habitat and movement patterns are protected.
- Visitor use is concentrated to minimize wildlife impacts. There is no significant increase in access to sensitive areas nor increase in visitor use adjacent to the ski area.
- The focus is on learning about the park and world heritage site. Services and activities that are in direct support of facilitating visitor learning opportunities can also be considered. New activities will only be considered if they are consistent with the park management plan or related park wide direction.
- Education must be an essential aspect of any new summer use outside of the base area.
- The experience reinforces the unique location in a national park.
- Potential impacts on other park users are satisfactorily addressed.
- Initiatives complement broader area land use strategies.

Site Guidelines for each ski area may identify additional site-specific requirements. Decisions on summer use will be determined through a Long-Range Plan and application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

Where summer use is permitted it will be carefully managed to ensure ecological values are not compromised. Ongoing monitoring programs will be put in place to ensure ecological issues are being effectively addressed. Additional mitigations will be put in place if necessary.

Outside the Developed Area

- Ski area expansion into Undeveloped Areas, Un-skied Terrain and Un-serviced Terrain can only be considered if there are Substantial Environmental Gains. An example of an

exception that can be considered is a leasehold reduction or reconfiguration that results in better protection of sensitive areas in exchange for development in less sensitive areas. New land, in exchange for removal of the sensitive areas from the leasehold, will be managed through a Licence of Occupation consistent with the tenure of the lease.

- Leasehold expansion will be prohibited. Licences of Occupation will be used to manage avalanche trigger zones that are outside of existing leasehold areas.

Memorable Experiences

- The nature of ski area operations and visitor experiences will reflect and reinforce its location in a national park and world heritage site consistent with the expectations for communities and outlying commercial accommodation operations.

In winter, new activities will be consistent with the park management plan or related park wide direction. Motorized (excluding ski lifts) activities will not be permitted. Activities that take place inside commercial buildings and non- motorized activities, that take place on ski runs and that involve sliding downhill similar to skiing and snowboarding, can be considered outside of a Long-Range Plan subject to Superintendent approval

Education

- Ski areas will be encouraged to provide winter educational opportunities that focus on the heritage values of the park and world heritage site as a component of the skiing/snowboarding experience.

Environmental Stewardship

- An environmental management system and monitoring system, consistent with the environmental policies and the principles identified in *Sustainable Slopes, The Environmental Charter for Ski Areas*, will be a component of a Long-Range Plan.

Leases

- At the request of a ski area operator, a new 42-year lease will be negotiated as part of the long-range planning process. Exceptions to the Ski Area Management Guidelines and development in less sensitive areas can be considered, as previously noted, for those ski areas that advance leasehold reconfiguration during the planning process, to expedite better protection of park lands.
- Alternatively, a ski area operator may elect to negotiate a new 42-year lease upon expiration of their current lease.
- The new lease will rationalize the leasehold boundary with the perimeter of the new Developed Area and reflect the negotiated Growth Limits. New leases will continue to be subject to legislation, regulations, policy and guidelines in force and as modified from time to time.

Projects in Advance of a New Long Range Plan

Since 2002, criteria have been in place that allowed the consideration of projects that had minimal potential to impact cumulative effects, to be considered in advance of a new Long-Range Plan. Several projects have met the previous criteria and have either been approved or are at an advanced stage of discussion. These can continue to be considered and are listed below:

Marmot Basin

- Lower chalet deck expansion

Sunshine Village

- Terrace Wing hotel replacement
- Temporary snowmaking on lower ski out

Following the completion of Site Guidelines, and in recognition that it will take time to prepare a Long-Range Plan, Parks Canada may consider additional projects if they are entirely within the existing Developed Area, do not contribute significantly to cumulative effects, are not linked to other projects and Long-Range Plan decisions and do not result in incremental expansion. The following are the types of projects that may be considered:

- Replacement of existing ski lifts;
- Parking lot improvements within the existing footprint;
- Limited terrain modification of existing ski runs; and
- Improvements to snowmaking infrastructure to support existing ski runs currently covered by snowmaking; water withdrawal would need to remain within existing water permit limits.

Beyond the types of projects noted above, the consideration of future projects in advance of Site Guidelines and Long-Range Plans will be strictly restricted to those that are maintenance, repair, replacement on a true 'like-for-like' basis or that are supported by Parks Canada for environmental reasons.

Definitions

Developed Area

The Developed Area represents the area modified for skiing or other uses within the leasehold through the construction of physical works, or through clearing/removal of trees and other vegetation, landscaping, terrain modification or other activity associated with ski area operation. It includes ski runs, lift lines, parking areas, commercial buildings, operational buildings and forested areas between ski runs. It does not include Undeveloped Areas, Un-serviced Terrain and Un-skied Terrain. The perimeter of the Developed Area will be determined by:

- the top terminal of the upper most lifts;
- the outer limits of formally cut ski runs/gladed areas or approved Ski Terrain; and
- the perimeter of base/parking, staging and operational areas.

Growth Limits

The maximum amount of development/resource utilization over time; represents build out.

Like for Like

Buildings and facilities can be replaced if they remain essentially the same. Lifts can be replaced, but the nature and location cannot. Buildings can be replaced with ones that have the same size, functions, capacity and location.

Long-Range Plan

Outline the development and operation of the ski area for all seasons for a period of 5 to 15 years. Long-Range Plans will include an environmental management system and Best Management Practices. As required by the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, ski area Long-Range Plans are subject to a comprehensive study. Following the approval of a Long-Range Plan, development, consistent with the plan, can proceed to the permitting stage without the need for additional environmental assessments.

Serviced Terrain

An area that is lift accessible and regularly maintained to facilitate or improve visitor use and safety including the provision of signage, avalanche control, ski patrol, grooming, snowmaking, brushing, individual tree removal and access/egress.

Site Guidelines

Based on the Ski Area Management Guidelines, ski area specific Site Guidelines outline what development and use may be permitted, Growth Limits, the broad parameters for the type, nature and location of development and use and the approaches to enhance the character of the ski area's operation to reflect its location in a national park and world heritage site. They provide direction for the preparation of Long-Range Plans. Site Guidelines are intended to guide development and use for the foreseeable future

Ski Terrain/Run

Ski terrain/run is an area that is routinely skied over the course of a normal ski day (subject to avalanche and snow conditions). The terrain includes alpine areas, formally cut runs/trails, gladed areas, cat tracks, roads, lift lines or connectors. The terrain has been developed or is serviced. It does not include areas that require ski touring, hiking, or climbing to access or egress areas that are not serviced.

Substantial Environmental Gain

An environmental gain is a positive change in key ecological conditions (wildlife movement and habitat, wildlife mortality, sensitive species/areas and aquatic ecosystems) that leads to the restoration or the long-term certainty of maintaining ecological integrity.

In order to determine if an ecological gain is substantial, the following criteria will be considered:

- magnitude – major as opposed to minor improvement;
- geographic context – broad scale as opposed to localized impact; and
- ecological context – improved protection or positive impacts to high value, rare or sensitive species/or multiple species.

Undeveloped Area is a natural area that has not been previously developed or altered for skiing or other uses.

Un-serviced Terrain may or may not be accessed from existing lifts, however services as described in Serviced Terrain are not provided.

Un-skied Terrain is an area that is Undeveloped and not serviced. Skiing is limited to those activities that typically occur in backcountry areas and involves ski touring, hiking, climbing and personal avalanche safety management.

Appendix Two - Terrain Modification

The following criteria will be used to assess terrain modification proposals (eg. ski terrain, parking lot, reservoir etc) in order to determine whether they are major or minor.

	Minor	Major
<i>Magnitude</i>	The alteration of isolated physical features; major features remain	An overall change in grade, slope or configuration of natural terrain; major features are removed
<i>Ecological context</i>	No impact to unique or sensitive features	Alteration of unique or sensitive features
<i>Vegetation Reclamation</i>	Readily reclaimed within a few growing seasons	Reclamation difficult or uncertain within a few growing seasons
<i>Reversibility and duration</i>	Ecological and aesthetic conditions are maintained without future restoration	Involves permanent aesthetic scarring or ecological impairment without future restoration
<i>Visual impact</i>	Undetectable after reclamation	Readily visible to off-hill park visitors
<i>Sense of place – nature of development</i>	Natural appearance consistent with local terrain variation	Constructed, man-made, artificial in nature

Application

- To be considered a minor change, all the minor criteria must be met.
- Major changes are considered significant. They can only be considered if they are treated as exceptions to the *Ski Area Management Guidelines*. They require a substantial environmental gain in order to be considered.

Definitions

Feature is a noticeable form or shape that stands out from the immediate surrounding terrain. Major features are prominent and influence the overall character of the immediate surrounding terrain.

Minor terrain modification is limited to isolated features, does not affect ecosystem composition, structure or function and is readily restored, resulting in changes that are essentially indiscernible to the visitor from features in the natural environment. Basic nature of

the terrain remains unchanged. May be supported with removable structures that are designed to limit physical modification to the terrain, particular in the case of ski ways.

e.g. rock removal, edge shaving of portions of the width of a run, levelling of isolated, non prominent features, ski way decking.

Major terrain modification involves what is essentially permanent change to the physical, ecological or aesthetic configuration of the local landscape over wide spread areas or where reclamation or restoration in the future is difficult, unlikely or uncertain. The basic nature of the terrain is changed.

e.g. run grade modification, cut and fill ski-ways, roads, cat tracks, off-road vehicle retaining walls, platforms, bridges, terrain park features, removal of character defining features, levelling across the entire width of a run.