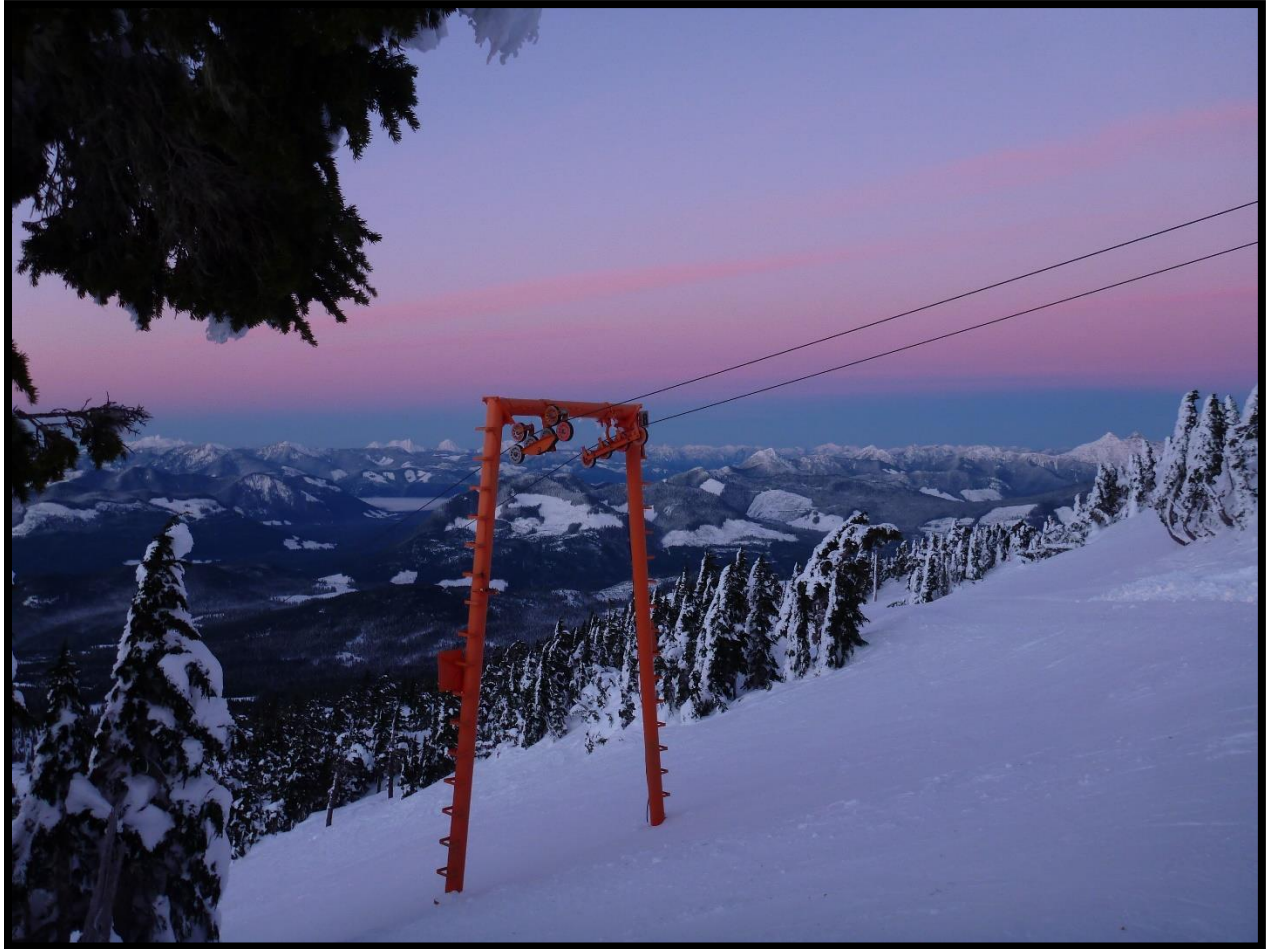


MOUNT CAIN

FIVE AND TEN YEAR SKI HILL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2022- 2027



Submitted by the Mount Cain Alpine Park Society

May 2022

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1. BACKGROUND

The Mount Cain Alpine Society acknowledges that Mount Cain is located on the territory of the 'Namgis First Nation, we honour and respect our relationship with this nation and are grateful to be able to recreate on these lands.

The Mount Cain Recreation Area (Mount Cain) is located in the Sutton Range west of Highway 19, 16 km up Schoen Lake Road, roughly 24 km from the village of Woss. The last 8 km to Mount Cain rise from the valley bottom to the base of a ski hill at 1195 metres, roughly 430 metres below the 1626 metre elevation upper lift station. Mount Cain typically receives a substantial yearly snowfall of 6 to 10 metres, averaging 9.7 metres annually at the base of the ski area.

Mount Cain functions primarily as a regional ski hill with alpine skiing and snowboarding in winter as well as self-set snowshoe, cross country and backcountry skiing, which draw participants primarily from the surrounding area including Port McNeil, Sointula; Alert Bay, Port Hardy, Woss, Zeballos, Tahsis, Sayward, Campbell River, and the Comox Valley. Additional customers come from the remainder of Vancouver Island and the Salish Sea Islands, the city of Vancouver and lower mainland, and other western provinces and states. In the summer, Mount Cain is used by the surrounding communities for recreational hiking, climbing, and foraging for wild edible plants and mushrooms. The Mount Cain Alpine Park Society (MCAPS) operates the facility within the Regional District of Mount Waddington (RDMW) Regional Park. In 2021-22, MCAPS had 3165 society members. In 2020 we started asking anyone who purchased a ticket to become a member, to help with our Covid 19 safety plan and contact tracing.

A previous development plan prepared for Mount Cain used the Commercial Alpine Ski Policy to assess the mountain's potential. Mount Cain has been defined as a Regional Destination ski resort and its capacity as a four-season destination area is recognized. MCAPS operates the ski hill with 21 runs with 20% beginner, 45% intermediate and 35% advanced terrain. The in-bounds skiable area is about 280 acres, served by two T-bars and a handle tow.

During the winter, Mount Cain operates on weekends and holidays and is available to school and First Nation groups on Mondays for low cost lessons with the aim to promote winter recreation, healthy lifestyles and foster community relationships. Approximately 10,000 skiers use Mount Cain annually. No other ski hills exist in the area, with the exception of a regional ski facility at Mount Washington in the Comox Valley Regional District. No comparison can be made between the Mount Cain and Mount Washington due to the latter's scale of operation. Mount Washington experiences up to 7,000 visitors daily during the peak holiday ski season; this is far in excess of Mount Cain's capacity.

Long-term trends in skier visits show consistent growth, dependent on snow conditions. Seasons with good snow coverage average about 12,000 skier visits per season, which is up from the pre-2010 average of about 9000 skier visits per season.

MCAPS operates two snow grooming machines and has additional equipment including a dozer, grader and snowmobiles to service the hill, 0.8 ha parking lot and access road. Storage and maintenance buildings support all ski hill functions and are located at the base of the hill adjacent to the parking lot. The T-bars and handle-tow operate from electrical power provided by diesel generators.

Four other development planning processes have been completed recently:

- 2013-2017 Five Year Development Plan
- 2013-2017 Five Year Development Plan - updated in 2015
- 2019 Summer Operations Feasibility Study
- 2018-22 Five Year Development Plan – updated November 2020

This 2022-2027 plan will update the status of the previous plans and set the stage for future development at Mount Cain.

2. MISSION STATEMENT – MOUNT CAIN ALPINE PARK SOCIETY

MCAPS is a North Island organization run by a volunteer board. Its resources are limited, and as such, MCAPS is not in a position to pursue resort development of the same magnitude that a large corporation might pursue. MCAPS has been guided by the following principles:

1. *To provide employment opportunities for North Islanders;*
2. *To provide affordable, sustainable recreational activities for North Islanders;*
3. *To maintain Mount Cain as a viable community ski resort;*
4. *To continue to emphasize the unique, niche market appeal of Mount Cain;*
5. *To pursue modest expansion of the ski resort;*
6. *To maintain the current equipment and assets in working order and replace older equipment as required.*

3. EXISTING FACILITIES

Detailed descriptions of existing facilities and terrain characteristics are outlined below.

3.1 Day Lodge

The existing 324 m² structure built in 1979/1980 is a four-storey building housing a retail and rental shop on the first floor, a restaurant on the second floor, a hostel-style accommodation for up to eighteen people. During the 2021-22 Season the third floor was used for adult staff accommodation, to allow for greater health and safety spacing in response to Covid-19. The restaurant staff are housed on the fourth floor. Services at the lodge are limited. They include water for the restaurant kitchen and composting toilets located in a separate out-building.

3.2 First Aid - Ski Patrol

Mount Cain's first-aid and ski patrol building is located at the base of the ski hill, separate from the lodge.

3.3 Ticket Booth

Weekend lift ticket sales occur in a separate building across the parking lot from the main base lodge. The second storey of this building serves as an office and board meeting room.

3.4 Rental Accommodations

Mount Cain has two self-contained cabins, a suite, and a hostel-style lodge available for rent by the weekend. The two cabins sleep a maximum of 10 people each, the suite a maximum of 12 and the hostel/lodge up to 33 people. The third floor of the Day Lodge can be used as additional hostel accommodation when it is not being used for staff, this need is assessed seasonally, and will return to rentals for the 2022-23 ski season.

3.5 Ski Area, Trails & Lifts

Mount Cain has in-bounds skiable terrain area totalling 39.7 ha while the actual marked ski trail area covers approximately 26 ha. There are three lifts on the hill - one handle tow and two T-bars with a total capacity of about 2,500 lift rides per day.

3.6 Equipment and Maintenance Buildings

Equipment for maintenance consists of two grooming machines and a variety of other equipment including snowmobiles, a grader and D8 dozer used to clear and maintain road and parking areas. Electricity is provided by diesel-powered generators located inside the maintenance building where the snow groomers are parked. The dozer is stored in a separate maintenance building.

3.7 Parking

Parking can be crowded but is manageable. Approximately 120 parking spaces are provided at the base of the mountain, adjacent to the base lodge and rental cabins.

3.8 RV Park

There are presently 11 RV parking spots in the area to the south of the maintenance building for staff/ volunteers who do not own cabins to stay for the winter season. The trailers must be

self-contained with no electrical hookups or negative impact on the surrounding environment. There is a separate outhouse for the users that is pumped out each summer. The purpose of the RV park is to provide a small, accessible & sustainable community for members who have been and continue to be meaningful contributors to the ongoing operations of MCAPS.

3.9 Staff Accommodation

Staff accommodation consists of two buildings and three small trailers/cabins. The three trailer/cabins are located between the Hostel/Lodge and the maintenance building and are set aside for groomer operators and maintenance workers who often need to sleep on irregular schedules, as they work while the lifts are not in operation. The smaller staff building is set aside for managers and cleaning/maintenance staff with families. The main staff accommodation building is fully self-contained with washroom and kitchen facilities and sleeps a maximum of 28 people.

3.10 Access Roads

Mount Cain is accessed by approximately 16 km of gravel-surfaced logging roads. The first 1.5 km is controlled and maintained by Western Forest Products (WFP) who hold the road permit; we have a road use agreement with WFP. The next 14.5 km is a Forest Service Road (FSR), which is a new designation as of 2017. On the FSR, Mount Cain is permitted as a Secondary user to the Primary user being WFP. Schoen Lake Provincial Park also uses the first 1.5 km WFP road and the lower 4.5 km of the FSR.

Adjacent to the ski hill is the Mount Cain Cabin Owners lease area, which has 52 cabins and an approximate combined tax revenue to the province of \$60,000 to \$70,000 per year, of which \$0 returns toward maintaining road access to the cabin area. The Cabin owners have an association that collects annual funds that are often donated for road maintenance and equipment.

Parking lot expansion progress was made during the summer of 2021 and will continue in 2022. However, it continues to be difficult to provide adequate safe parking and keep the snow removed daily as our ski visits increase.

From the parking lot to the lift stations, access is approximately 3.5 km of road that is needed for annual summer maintenance of the lifts and lift stations. The road access to the upper station on the lower lift is in vital need of a realignment to a new location on the ridge run; the access to the upper lift requires re-surfacing and drainage improvements.

2022 Roads Objectives:

1. Annual funding to maintain all access roads, structures, and drainages. This would cover snow removal, machinery maintenance and/or machinery upgrades.
2. To include summer maintenance.

4. PROGRESS ON THE 2018-2022 PLAN

Future priorities for the 2018-2022 plan were outlined in 2018 and then updated in 2020. The following table lists the projects identified in those plans, and updates their status, indicating if they are to be included in further planning.

Focus	2013-2017 Goals	2017/18 Status	2018-2022 Plan	2022 Status
Roads (including lift station access)	New pullouts and maintenance – Request transfer to province	Road changed to FSR in 2017. Material developed in quarry	Resurfacing; detailed Engineering design; significant upgrade; annual funding for snow removal and maintenance.	Pursue annual funding for snow removal and maintenance.
Grader/D8 Dozer	Maintenance –create a \$50,000 reserve fund	\$28,000 spent on maintenance (no funds set aside)	Continue to set money aside for maintenance and/or upgrades.	D8 is undergoing rebuild in 2022-23
Water System	Plan for water system upgrade	Well drilled	Install cistern and switch to well water.	New water system - Completed
Sewer System	Monitor flows	no change	Expand septic field - highest priority .	Current system has been expanded and a new sewer system has been started for the new building.
New Lodge	Develop initial plans and financing for a new lodge	Upgrades were made to existing lodge, hostel and retail/rental area.	Remains a high priority . Develop initial plans and financing for a new lodge	Plan is for the existing Lodge to be expanded and refurbished in the next 5 year cycle.
Ski Patrol Building	Refine plans for expanded ski-patrol building – seek funding	No new building	Expand existing building and add running water.	Ski Patrol building has hot water and Will move into the ground floor of the new building.
Electrical Upgrades / Generators	Begin overhaul of the electrical station and power generator	Purchased new high efficiency generators	Install new efficient generators and electrify the lower T-bar.	Lower T-Bar Electrified for the 2020-21 season
RV Park	Develop and implement RV park management plan	Completed	Possibly expand RV parking area.	RV Expansion is a high priority for the 2022-27 plan.

Focus	2013-2017 Goals	2017/18 Status	2018-2022 Plan	2022 Status
New Rental Cabins	Plan for new rental cabins; build if conditions warrant.	No new rental cabins	New rental cabins not a 5 year priority.	The second floor of the new building will be 6 suites for rental accommodation.
Park Boundaries	Seek CRA boundary extension to include Lake & West Bowl.	No action	Pursue boundary extensions.	Continue to pursue expansion. MCAPS has formed a subcommittee to outline boundary request. MCAPS has engaged in the consultation process of the Gwa'nii Project
Parking Lot	Plan parking lot upgrade	No action	Remains a high priority . Seek funding to expand parking area.	Funding received and expansion underway
Lifts	Repairs as needed	Replaced upper T-Bar bull-wheels	Replace lower T-Bar bull-wheels. Electrify lower T-Bar. New lower lift communication cables.	Communication cables still required.
Groomer	Build Reserve Fund	\$20,000 set aside.	Continue to build reserve fund to buy an additional groomer within 5 years.	Continue to build reserve fund to buy an additional groomer within 5 years

Focus	2013-2017 Goals	2017/18 Status	2018-2022 Plan	2022 Status
Snowmobiles	Build Reserve Fund	\$5000 set aside	Continue to build reserve fund.	Funds have been allocated in the 2022-23 budget.
Nordic and Snowshoe Plans	Complete plan	No action	Better define and map safe-snowshoe routes outside of Mount Cain's property. Maintain the self-track set cross country trails that presently exist.	. We include snowshoeing as an activity on our liability insurance application. Pursuing an RDNW tourism grant to fund trail development, signage and equipment.
Cabin Lots	Assess demand.	No new cabins; 52 existing cabin sites. Sewage pump & haul agreement with RDMW renewed in 2017.	The possibility of adding cabin lots is to be reviewed on an annual basis dependent on demand and the Province's approval.	Pump and Haul agreement renewed in 2022. No additional lots to be added at this time

Updates on the 2018-2022 Plan

Focus	Description	2018-2022 Goals	2022 Update/ Next Steps
Summer Grooming	During low snow years, often the upper mountain has plenty of snow cover and the bottom does not. Removal of all small trees and shrubs from the lower mountain runs would likely allow us to open the ski hill sooner during low-snow conditions.	Seek funding to help offset the cost of summer grooming. Summer groom the lower mountain during the 2018 summer season.	Summer grooming on the lower mountain occurred during the 2021 summer. Continue to seek funding to offset costs.
Adult Staff Accommodation	Volunteers and employees now require more places to stay while at the hill.	Build a bunkhouse style addition to the existing Ski Patrol building to house adult volunteers and employees in need	Staff accommodation is reviewed annually to determine need. Ski Patrol building will be reassessed after the

		of a place to stay; seek funding to offset these expenses.	completion of the new building.
Focus	Description	2018-2022 Goals	2022 Update/Next Steps
Upper Lift building	Upgrade the upper lift building so that there is additional first aid storage and a place for patrollers to stay warm up on the upper mountain.	Upgrade the building; this may require ridge run access road improvements so that construction supplies can be brought to the site during the summer.	Ridge road was upgraded 2021. Minor Improvements made.
Wash house – public flush toilets	Presently, the day-use public only have a composting toilet to use.	Highest priority: Expand septic field to meet future demands; trench to tie into water system; build wash house building or incorporate into a new Day Lodge.	In Progress! Will be on the parking lot level of the new building.
Terrain Park	There is a decline in skier visits by 13-16 year olds. A Terrain Park could increase interest, especially with the attention given to North Island athletes in the 2018 Olympics.	Send groomer operators on a course to learn how to build a safe Terrain Park. Seek funding to modify an existing ski run to accommodate a terrain park.	Plan to include a “pop up” style terrain park on occasional weekends in the 2022-23 season. Terrain Park has been added to liability insurance. Continue to looking for funding opportunities.
Four Season Operations	With the addition of the water well, Mount Cain can now seriously consider developing year-round recreation and hopefully generate continuous revenue through accommodation rentals and hosting events.	Seek funding for hiking trail improvement; possible via ferrata type tourist attraction.	Summer Director will be added to board of directors’ slate at the 2022-23 AGM. Board is in discussion about a GM position. Seek possible funding sources for further development.
Access	Once access to the parking lot and lift lines is upgraded, annual maintenance costs will still remain to be a major budget issue.	Annual funding for continued maintenance (snow removal, summer road works, machinery	Continue to apply for and seek funding for continued maintenance.

		maintenance, and upgrades)	
Bus	Mount Cain offers a shuttle service for customers who would rather not drive their vehicle on the ski hill access road.	Sell old busses, purchase a newer bus.	Shuttle Service was not provided during the 2020-21; 2021-22 seasons due to Covid and lack of bus drivers. Old Bus was sent for scrap. Pursuing Ride Share options. Seeking third party operator for shuttle service.
New winter activities	Establish a designated family toboggan area near the Day Lodge.	Clear an area between the lower lift and cabin area for tobogganing. This space could also be used for early season snow farming, using snow fences to trap snow.	The grooming team has been laying a track around the lodge, down past the Coyne building and looping out toward the lake and up the side of the lodge – the pitches heading to the lake have been used as tobogganing areas. Pursue funding to add lights to the toboggan area. Continue to explore additional space for ideal toboggan location. Add Ice Skating opportunity on Cain lake (behind the lodge) – seek funding for purchase of flooding pump and snowblower.

5. NEW PRIORITIES SINCE THE 2018-2022 PLAN

Since the 2018-2022 plan was updated in November of 2020, Mount Cain has had to rise to the challenge of operating during the Covid -19 global pandemic. In March 2020 Mount Cain closed two weeks earlier than scheduled due to a complete lock down, operating for 38 days in the 2019-2020 season. In 2020-21 with new health and safety measures in place, but a lack of snow we did not open until December 26th and were open for 45 days. This year, 2021-22, continuing to follow the PHO, and with a cold snowy start to the winter, Mount Cain opened on December 18th and were operational for 58 days.

Covid did bring a silver lining, in 2020-21 MCAPS received an economic stimulus grant for \$874,000 to build a new building that will house Ski Shop; move Ski Patrol to the parking lot level to allow for easier patient transfers and will house new plumbed bathrooms – our members are very excited about this! The upper floor of the building will be 6 rental suites. We intend to allocate much of the funds from these rentals for upgrades and improvements to our historic and much-loved Day lodge.

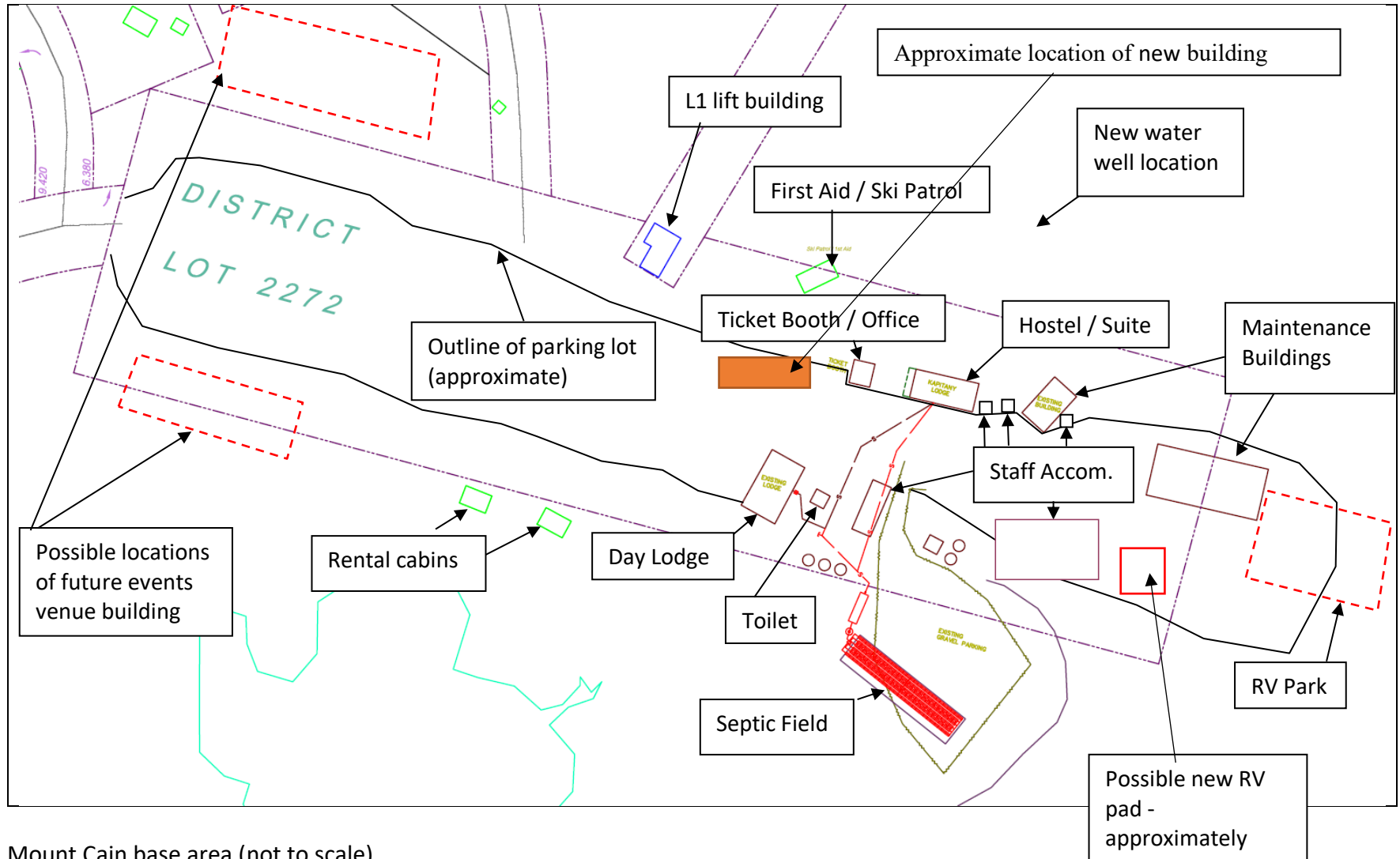
The table below outlines our new five year plan high priority items not listed in the table above.

Focus	Description and Goals for 2022-27
New Building	Complete New Building – Ski Patrol Ski Shop Bathrooms 6 rental suites Including additional septic upgrade (separate system)
Controlled Recreation Area expansion	Work with the 'Namgis Nation, the RDMW and the province to apply for expansion of base area in the SE section.
Additional RV Park space	Construction of an access road and camping pad area.
Summer Operations	New director position will develop policy and pathways that lead to summer operations over the next several years.
Creation General Manager Position	Review opportunities to amalgamate existing duties and allow for oversight of managers. Outline duties for GM position
Develop a Capital equipment fund	Invest in GICs and contribute \$25,000 annually. Invest current savings in a GIC

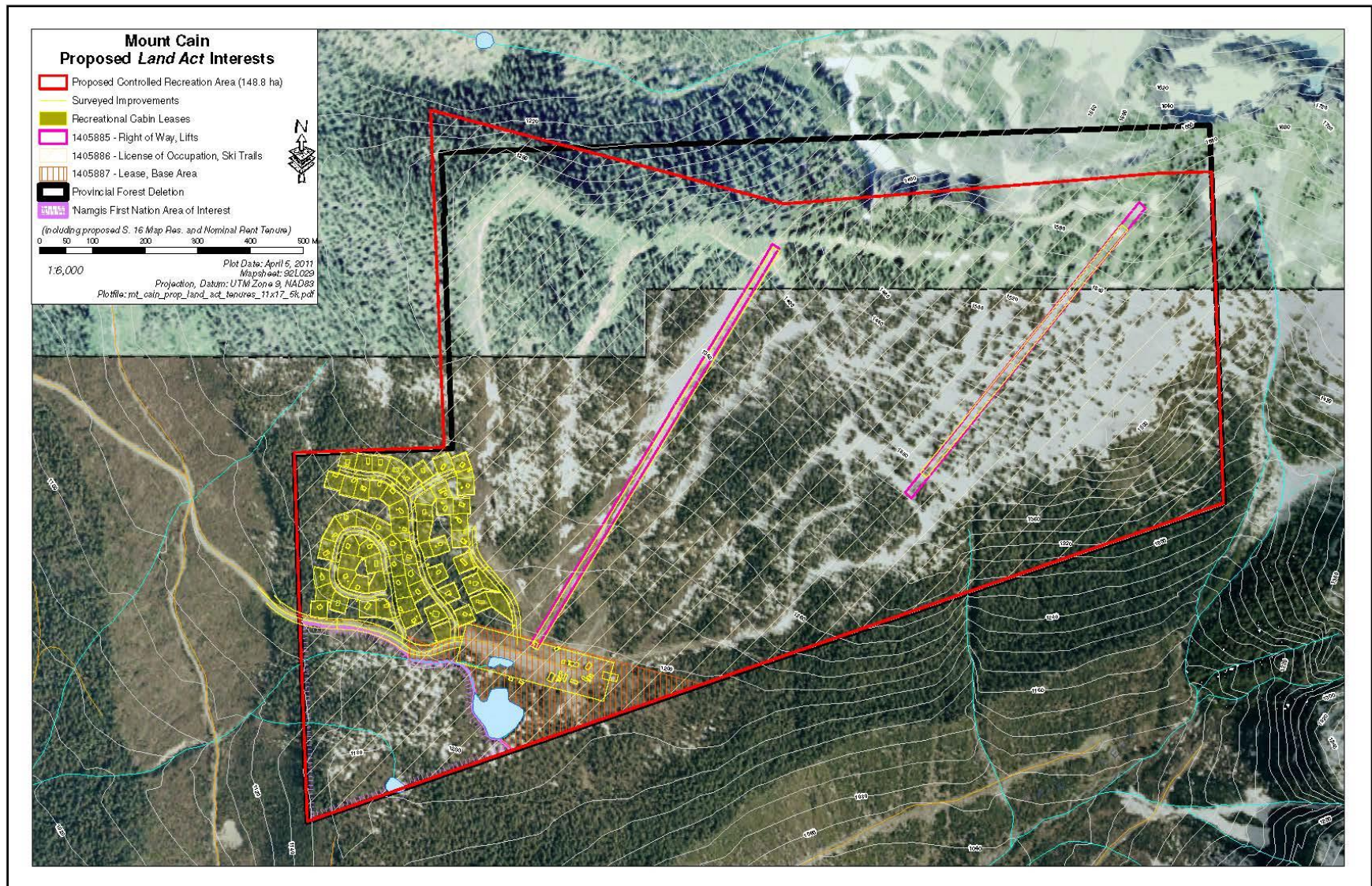
6. TEN YEAR PLAN PRIORITIES

Ten year plan items assume that Mount Cain continues to be profitable and meets its 5 year plan objectives. Ten year plan items tentatively include:

1. Green energy initiatives, explore solar energy opportunities and reduce carbon footprint by investing in a more efficient generators.
2. Employ a full-time mechanic for repairing and maintaining heavy duty equipment.
3. Purchase an excavator to be used for ongoing summer grooming and road maintenance.
4. Explore options for summer mountain biking with t-bar access.
5. Day Lodge Renovation and upgrade – this space may include the ability to host larger events.
6. L1 improvements – replace structural wood, reclad exterior and new roof.
7. Purchase and install another surface lift.
8. Increase accommodation options.



Mount Cain base area (not to scale).



Orthogonal view and topography of the ski hill and cabin area.