

CAMDEN SNOW BOWL

# Multi-Season Recreation Plan



SEPTEMBER  
2025



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*The Camden Snow Bowl Multi-Season Recreation Plan was prepared by the Town of Camden using Federal funds under award 01-79-15159/URI:11815 from the US EDA, of U.S. Department of Commerce. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EDA, or the U.S. Department of Commerce.*



# Foreword



The Camden Snow Bowl (Snow Bowl) is a treasured community recreation area, providing close to home ski, ride, and snowplay opportunities for town residents and regional visitors for over 89 years. During this time, summer use of the Snow Bowl has largely been driven by the efforts of volunteers and partner organizations who have helped develop and maintain on-mountain trails and host events. Put simply, summer operation of the Snow Bowl has not been a high priority when balanced against the broader suite of parks and recreation amenities.

In the last few years, the long-term financial sustainability of the Snow Bowl has received greater scrutiny as the Town pursues funds for larger capital investments and deferred maintenance projects. Running a ski area is expensive and complex, and the Snow Bowl is not alone in its pursuit of operational and financial sustainability. In the broader ski industry, operators are increasingly looking to summer operations for revenue generation—creating sought-after recreation experiences that align with the recreational setting and market interests.

**Ski areas that sequentially and serially make disciplined capital investments, continue to maintain – or gain market share, and those that don't, don't. Those that don't fail to remain competitive, and as a result, see visitation drop-off, and then net operating income starts to decline, and then the ability to make the capital investments decreases. Eventually, the operation fails.**

The Town of Camden understands the importance of maintaining the community feel of the Snow Bowl, while recognizing the potential for increased visitor use to improve its financial sustainability. Identifying the potential mix of activities and amenities that would both harness this tourism opportunity and continue to enhance the community experience, establishing where they go in the landscape, and clarifying the financial and operational implications, will be critical for future success.

In early 2025, the Town hired SE Group to develop a Multi-Season Recreation Plan (Plan) that evaluated how summer operations at the Snow Bowl could further support community recreation needs and attract visitors to support revenue generation. The intention was to think holistically about the opportunities of the site and the full suite of amenities necessary to support summer operations, within the context of previous planning efforts. Given that charge, this plan builds from past work including the 2006 Long Range Feasibility Study, the 2008 Ski Area Concept Plan, and the 2025 Trails Master Plan, all of which recommend significant investments into core infrastructure at the Snow Bowl.

Notably, this effort was specifically tailored towards the needs and opportunities at the Snow Bowl, not of the broader Camden Parks & Recreation portfolio. This plan is intended to be used by local officials, Town staff, volunteers, recreation groups, and related non-profits to support additional investment and increases in programming capacity at the Snow Bowl—transforming it into a vibrant, accessible, and financially sustainable year-round destination.





### Who is SE Group?

**SE Group, in collaboration with the Town of Camden and its stakeholders, is leading the charge on this planning effort. SE Group brings over 65 years of expertise in planning, designing, and developing ski areas, mountain communities, and outdoor recreational spaces. Rooted in the belief that outdoor recreation enriches lives and supports thriving communities, SE Group has become a leader in ski area and recreation planning.**

**Known for blending creativity and collaboration, SE Group consistently uncovers the unique potential of each project—ranging from local ski hills to internationally renowned mountain resorts—while maintaining a focus on sustainability and community connection. Their multi-disciplinary team of experts in ski area planning, landscape architecture, economic analysis, environmental planning, and community engagement ensures that each project is tailored to meet the needs of both clients and the communities they serve.**

## PLANNING PROCESS

The development of the Camden Snow Bowl Multi-Season Plan followed a comprehensive and collaborative process designed to incorporate community needs and broader recreation trends. SE Group, leveraging their extensive expertise in outdoor recreation and ski area planning, led the process in close partnership with the Town of Camden and local stakeholders. This analysis provided a solid foundation for the plan.

### PAST PLANNING REVIEW

The results of several previous planning efforts were reviewed to ensure that this plan was reinforcing key findings and building from prior analysis. This information was summarized by the planning team and was foundational to early discussions regarding the site context.

### SITE ANALYSIS

To better understand the major site constraints, a desktop analysis of available GIS data was conducted. Data layers explored included wetlands, setbacks, slopes, drainage, and built infrastructure such as lifts, power lines, and buildings. This analysis supported the proactive consideration of risks such as erosion and watershed degradation. In addition to the desktop analysis, a site visit was conducted to explore the Snow Bowl's features and assess the operation. This site visit also provided insight into the Snow Bowl's connection to the built environment of the Town and the recreation environment of the broader region. The existing site map is available on page 14.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Snow Bowl is a treasured community recreation area, built and sustained by the Camden community. Just after the winter season ended, a community open house was conducted by the planning team to hear about the needs, goals, and priorities of this planning process. Later in the planning process, a second open house was conducted to present and collect feedback on the initial recommendations.

## MARKET RESEARCH

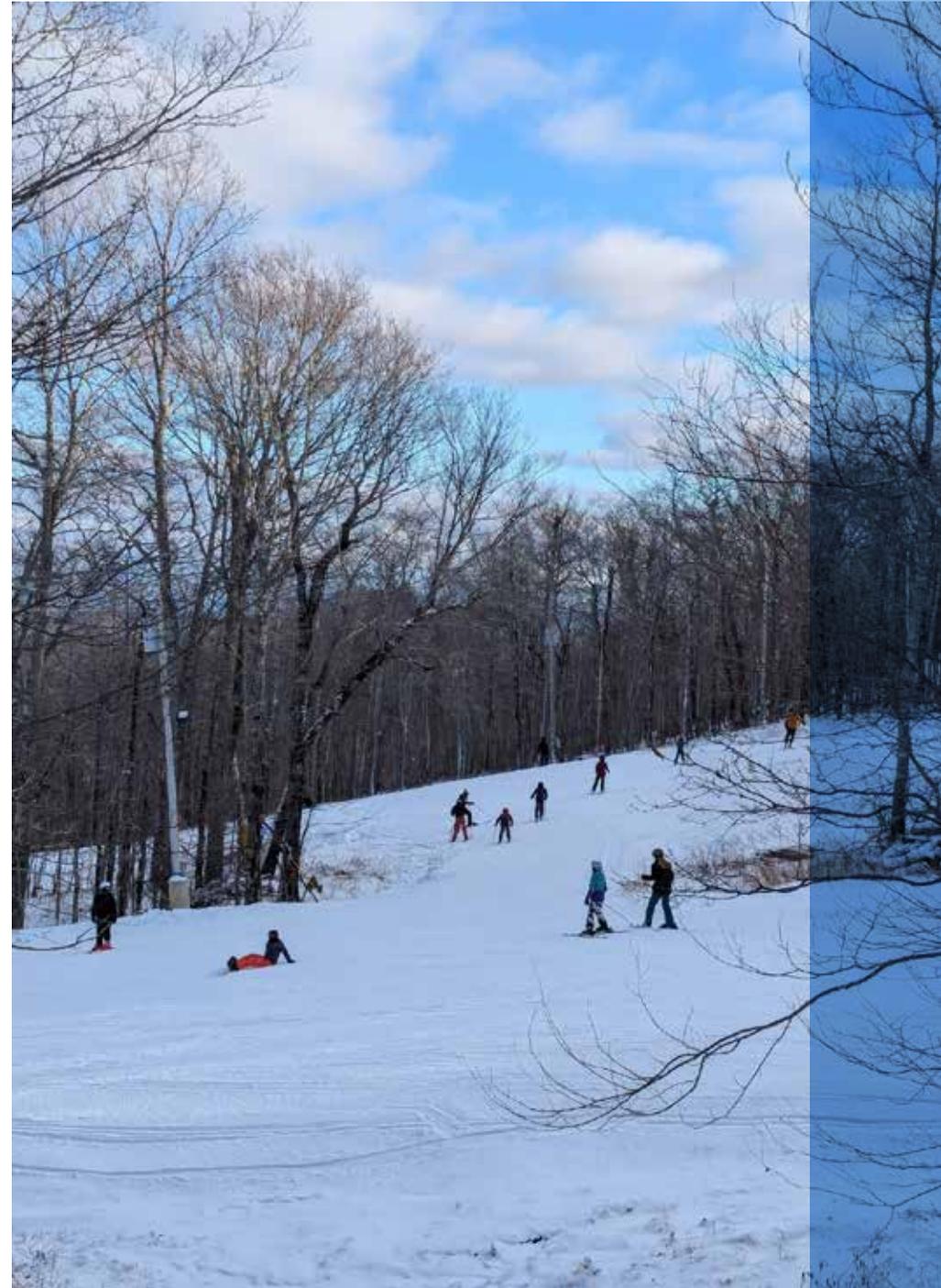
To better understand the recreation and tourism market context, an assessment of state and national recreation trends as well as local, regional, and statewide tourism trends was conducted. Information from the Census, Maine Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the Maine Tourism Study, and the Mid-Coast Maine Tourism Study supported this assessment along with visitor traffic insights from the Maine Department of Transportation and human mobility data provider, Placer.AI. The assessment illustrates the scale of the local, regional, and national visitor market and provides insight into the volume of the potential audience and the types of activities visitors are seeking out.

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Utilizing information gleaned from the site analysis, community feedback, and market research, the planning team created a Vision Plan concept that illustrated how the proposed amenities would fit within the existing landscape. The Vision Plan was shared with the community in an open house.

## FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

Financial assessments were prepared for each amenity, event, and program. These assessments explored the assumptions related to implementation phasing, future visitation potential, pricing, labor and operating expenses—providing an understanding of the potential financial performance of the main elements of the Plan.





# Camden Snow Bowl - Today



Ragged Mountain Recreation Area spans 260 acres northwest of downtown Camden. This town park is home to the Camden Snow Bowl, a small ski area built by the volunteer labor of the Camden Outing Club in the 1930's. What was once a rope tow and a few trails is now a town-operated ski area with several support buildings, two lifts, a magic carpet, a rope tow for tubing, 105 acres of ski terrain, and 7.8 miles of hiking and biking trails. In the winter, Camden Snow Bowl receives approximately 30,000 visits from skiers across the region. The Snow Bowl also hosts an annual Toboggan Race—the US National Toboggan Championships—which draws around 2,000 competitors. In the summer months, the trail network and sports fields see consistent use from the community and weekly and monthly events such as yoga, group mountain bike rides, and concerts also attract community members looking for outdoor activities. Other amenities at Ragged Mountain Recreation Area include Hosmer Pond—a 68-acre pond with a public boat launch—two tennis courts, and a dirt pump track. The Snow Bowl<sup>1</sup> also has the distinction of being the only ski area on the East Coast with ocean views.

The Snow Bowl has evolved significantly in the last 10-15 years as a result of renovations, redevelopment, and shifts in management culture. Throughout this evolution, community support for the Snow Bowl and for continued investment at the Snow Bowl has remained strong. In 2013, voters approved a \$2 million municipal bond to support investments into the chair lifts, base lodge, tubing, lighting, snowmaking, and parking. While the full suite of proposed redevelopment projects were not completed within the initial budget, most notably the proposed lodge—improvements were made, and residents are still in support of continued infrastructure investments into Snow Bowl facilities.

<sup>1</sup> In this plan, the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area is referred to as the “Camden Snow Bowl” or “the Snow Bowl”—leaning on the terminology used by local residents as well as visitors. This plan includes consideration of the ski-related facilities as well as the fields, pond, courts, and pump track area.

## TOWN OWNED & OPERATED

Being a town-owned ski area comes with unique operational, managerial, and financial considerations. For the Snow Bowl, community perspectives inform the types of programs offered, the cost of tickets and passes, and even the priority and scale of infrastructure investments. In the private sector, these decisions are typically more market and profit-driven. This plan explores how the Snow Bowl can maintain this community orientation while utilizing revenue collected from programs, events, and visitor-oriented amenities to offset operational costs and contribute to long-term financial sustainability.





## DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

### 1936-1981

Camden Outing Club led the development and operation of the Snow Bowl and the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area. Over those 55 years, the Outing Club organized thousands of volunteer hours, secured funding from two Federal grant programs and raised money privately to build and support the recreation area and its facilities.

### 1958-1970

After World War II came the installation of the first ski lift in 1958 and the full development of the ski area over an 18-year period through 1970.

### 1981

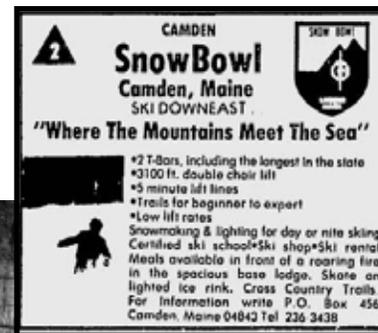
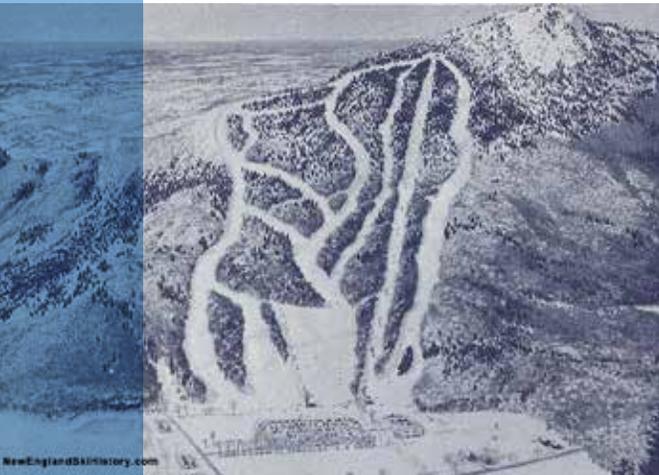
In 1981, the Town and the Outing Club agreed to lease the facility to a private operator, but that arrangement proved unsuccessful and in 1983 operations were assumed by the Town under the auspices of what is now the Camden Parks and Recreation Department. This operational structure continues today.

### 1991

Ragged Mountain Recreation Area Foundation was founded to create an endowment and raise funds to support and promote the Snow Bowl and RMRA and to augment municipal spending.

### 2006

Faced with a continued need to support the annual operating costs of the RMRA and the Snow Bowl and the aging facility's infrastructure, the Camden Select Board commissioned a long-range plan and feasibility study of the RMRA – completed by Horizons Engineering.



## 2008

Following the Horizons Engineering report, the Camden Select Board and the Parks and Recreation Committee assembled the RMRA Redevelopment Committee to develop recommendations for the future of the RMRA and to explore four-season use of the area. The Committee turned to the Foundation for financial support for the planning process and assembled a concept plan that was presented to the community in a series of public meetings in 2007 and 2008. Horizons Engineering updated its 2006 report with a Ski Area Concept Plan published in August 2008. The Committee identified \$6.5 million dollars in infrastructure expansion, renovation and replacement projects that would be necessary to achieve the objectives of the Horizons report for ski operations and the objectives of the Town for expanded use of the area. In November 2008, Camden voters supported the concept of issuing a \$2 million municipal bond to support redevelopment of RMRA by a margin of nearly 2:1. This advisory vote gave the Redevelopment Committee the confidence to move forward on detailed facility design. It also signaled the Foundation to proceed with its \$5.3 million private fundraising effort to finance a major redevelopment project. As part of its fundraising effort, the Foundation in 2013 commissioned Camoin Associates to produce the Camden Snow Bowl Impact Study. That document sought to measure the economic impact of the Snow Bowl on the town and surrounding community.

The 2008 Sustainability Plan emphasized facilitating ski and snowboarding improvements, while the approach to year-round and summer use was focused on better utilization of facilities while emphasizing the importance of summer marketing, awareness building and creating partnerships. Winter use at RMRA and the Snow Bowl has always been the backbone of its operations and was the real focus of the redevelopment that happened after voter approval in 2013.

## 2013

Based on that economic impact study, and the direct benefits of the RMRA and the Snow Bowl, in 2013, town voters approved the \$2 million dollar bond, which combined with funding from the Foundation enabled the town to embark on the redevelopment project that included major ski trail expansions, lighting improvements, septic system upgrades, stormwater improvements, the installation of a new (used) lift along with the relocation of an existing lift, a new lodge, and some limited additional snow making.

## NOW

The Town has heard the call of its citizenry and is committed to being proactive in transitioning the Snow Bowl from a winter sports-focused facility into a year-round, financially sustainable and resilient recreational area.





## CURRENT SUMMER OPERATIONS

In the summer months, the Snow Bowl attracts visitors to the trails, Hosmer Pond, the athletic fields, and the base lodge for both indoor and outdoor events. The athletic fields are heavily used by local teams and clubs for both youth and adult sports programs. There is a dedicated mountain bike community who use the Snow Bowl trails and help maintain them throughout the summer. The base lodge can be rented by private parties for events such as weddings and family reunions and has been used in the past for summer camp activities and hosting summer concerts. On Hosmer Pond, the boat launch provides access for swimming, paddleboarding, kayaking, and other non-motorized water sports. In the fall, the triple chairlift is used for fall foliage rides—capturing business from the leaf-peeping tourists exploring midcoast Maine. Finally, while the Snow Bowl does have two tennis courts on the shore of Hosmer Pond—they are not heavily used due to the condition of the playing surface.

### CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Hiking

Biking

Fall Lift Rides

Field-Sports (baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse, football)

Pump-Track

Tennis & Pickleball

Water activities (kayak, swimming, boating, fishing)

Dog walking

Events



Fall Lift Rides



Yoga on the Deck

## STAFF

The Snow Bowl is operated by the Camden Parks & Recreation Department. There are a total of 14 full-time positions who support the Snow Bowl between October and April. In the summer months, the majority of staff maintain the Snow Bowl, town cemeteries, boat launches and public parks and properties. The Parks and Recreation Department manager and assistant manager support events, programming, and marketing.

## EVENTS

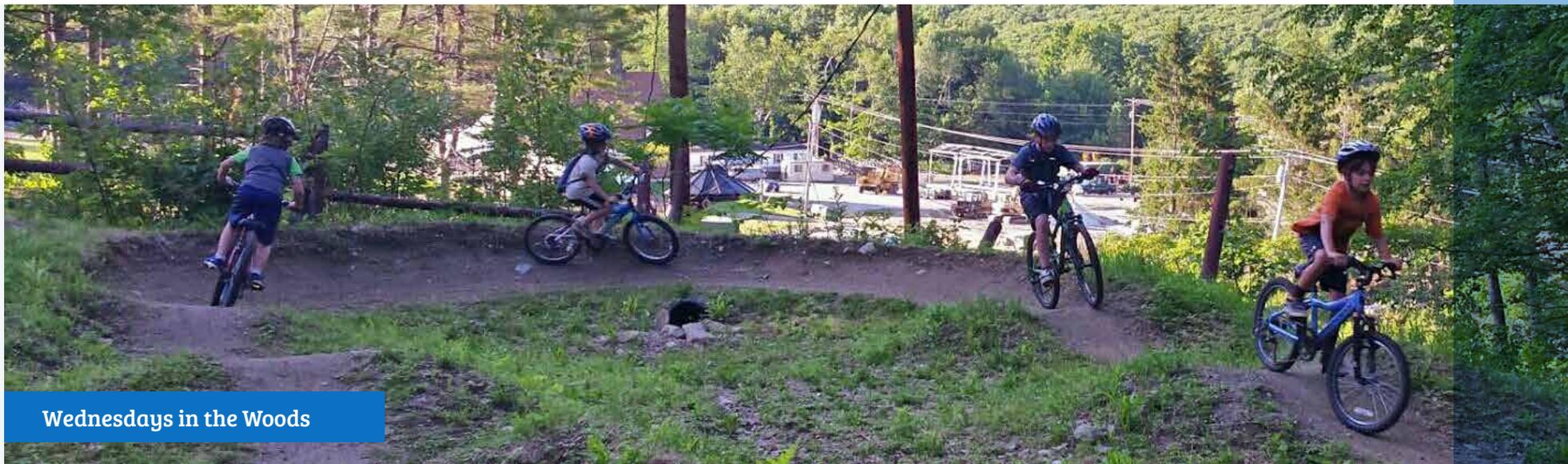
In the summer, there a variety of events and activities hosted at the Snow Bowl. Weekly events include “Yoga on the Deck” and “Wednesdays in the Woods”—a mountain bike group ride. The Camden Opera House organizes Camden Summer Sounds—weekly concerts throughout August on the Snow Bowl lawn. In October, Parks staff run the chairlift for weekly Fall Foliage chairlift rides every Sunday as well as the Saturday of Indigenous Peoples Day holiday weekend.

Weekly and monthly events held at the Snow Bowl by Camden Parks & Recreation are offered for free. Events such as Yoga on the Deck—which are offered by a concessionaire, do not currently generate revenue for the Snow Bowl, although attendees do pay a participation fee. The Fall Foliage chairlift rides, however, do generate revenue for the Snow Bowl, and past years have generated between \$20,000-\$40,000.

Due to limited staff capacity, events at the Snow Bowl are often operated and staffed by partner organizations and concessionaires.

## FACILITIES

The Snow Bowl base lodge is the main facility available for use during the summer months. This use has been somewhat restricted as it is not staffed by the recreation department. In the past, the lodge has been used by the local YMCA to host supper camp groups as well as private parties renting the lodge for weddings and events. Amenities such as restrooms, indoor seating, and food and beverage operations are not available to the public in the summer.



Wednesdays in the Woods



**LEGEND**

**BUILDINGS**

- A** A-Frame Lodge
- B** Race / Rentals / Retail
- M** Maintenance
- HR** Hotel Rockport

- 1** Tennis Court
- 2** ADA Water Access
- 3** Tubing Hill and Runout
- 4** Existing Pump Track

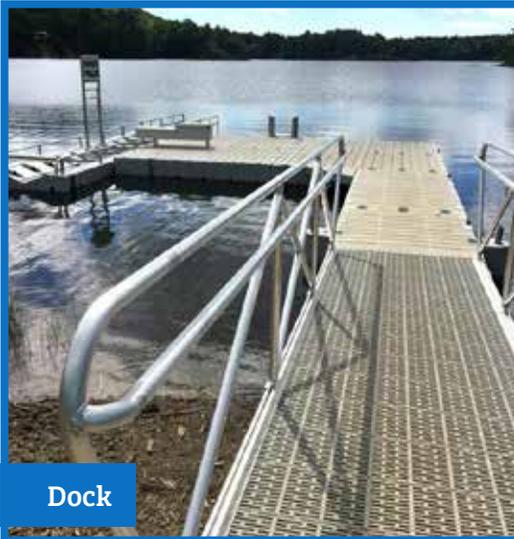
**KEY**

- Building Setback  
100' from a Great Pond and 25' from a Stream
- Shoreland Zoning Setback  
Area subject of local shoreland zoning permitting.
- Wetland of Special Significance  
May require a permit for impacts within 75-feet of a wetland. Determinations made on a case-by-case basis.
- Wetland  
Impacts may take place right down to the edge of the wetland.
- Proposed Shared Use Trail
- Proposed Downhill Only Bike Trail
- Hiking Only Trail
- Chair Lift (Winter Only)
- Chair Lift
- Snow Bowl Property Line
- Coastal Mountain Land Trust Property





Base Lodge



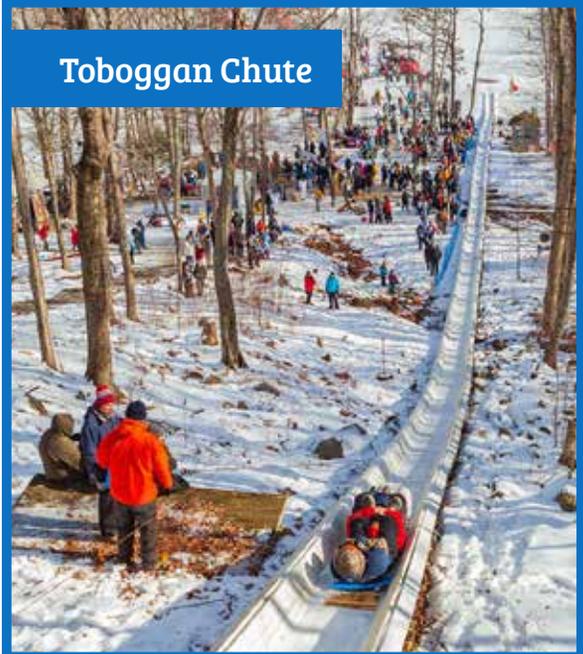
Dock



Trails



Toboggan Chute



Toboggan Chute



Tubing



Pump Track



## CHALLENGES

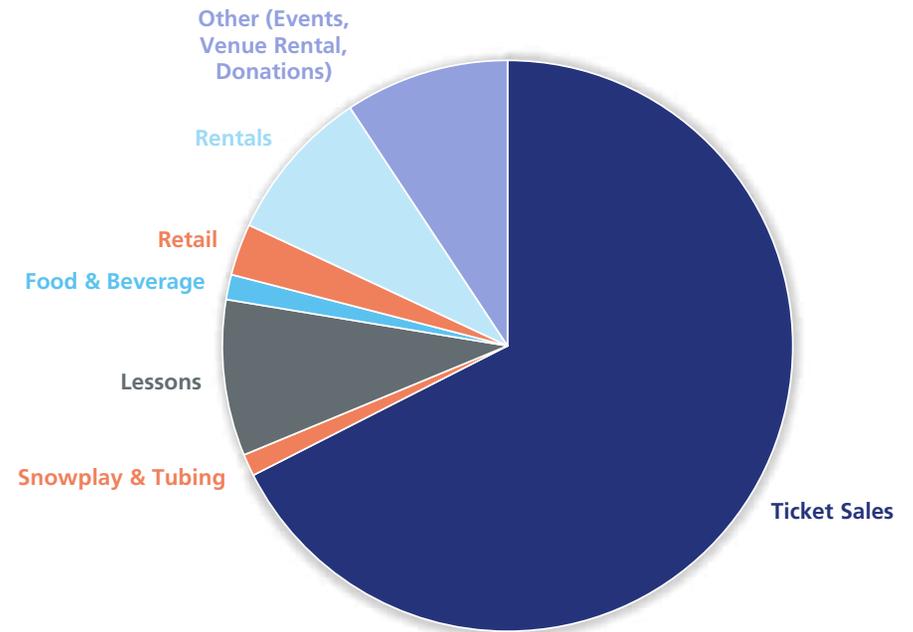
Parks and recreation areas provide the most public benefit when they can be used and enjoyed by a broad audience. The condition and availability of key facilities and amenities impede the Snow Bowl's ability to serve the needs of the community and generate much-needed revenue.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Currently, the Snow Bowl generates the vast majority of its revenue in the winter months through pass sales, events, tubing, lessons, rentals, and merchandise. In the non-winter months, revenue is primarily generated through the fall lift rides and facility rental fees (lodge, sports fields, chairlift).

Operating a ski area is an expensive undertaking. Maintaining lifts, staffing programs, creating a well-groomed snow surface, and offering lessons and rentals requires a steady stream of funds that typically comes from revenue generated from lift tickets and season pass sales, food and beverage, merchandise, and snow play activities (tubing, toboggan, etc.). As a town-owned and operated facility, the Snow Bowl is dedicated to maintaining affordable and high-quality recreation experiences for the community, as reflected in the current pricing strategy. The high costs of operations and maintenance, contrasted with the community-oriented mission of affordability, has created a scenario in which the Snow Bowl operates in a deficit that has to be offset each year by tax revenue. This financial situation is not sustainable, as costs associated with operations have risen over time. The Snow Bowl is already an efficient and lean operation, with little room to decrease overhead costs. Improving financial sustainability will require increasing revenue through programs and activities.

### FY 25 - SNOW BOWL WINTER SEASON REVENUE BREAKDOWN



### INFRASTRUCTURE & MAINTENANCE

There are several facilities and amenities at the Snow Bowl that require maintenance, renovation, or replacement, the most visible example being the Snow Bowl base lodge. Most ski area support services, such as rentals, ticketing, retail, and lessons, have outgrown the capacity of the existing base lodge and are now run out of several outbuildings. These capacity issues are persistent—the 2006 Long Range Feasibility Study recommends doubling the seating capacity and adding about 1,000 square feet of guest service space. Notably, in the 2006 plan, retail and rentals were already being run out of an outbuilding—illustrating the long-term nature of these space use deficiencies.

The current lodge is primarily used for food and beverage operations, which is undercapacity and does not meet the current needs of the winter operation. The lodge is also in need

of window replacements (ongoing), restroom and plumbing maintenance, and comprehensive facility modernization to meet ADA standards. The need for a new lodge was first identified in the 2006 Long Range Feasibility Study, and a new lodge was planned, but not constructed, as part of the renovations in 2013-2014.

In the summer and fall, the triple chairlift is operated for fall foliage rides (a total of five days in October) and for private parties who wish to rent it out. The lift ride offers great views of the Camden harbor and Atlantic Ocean, and private rentals and fall foliage rides provide important revenue.

Due to the age of the lift (now 41 years old), lift downloading is currently operated at a reduced capacity. Although not nearly the oldest fixed-grip double in the United States—there are operating fixed-grip doubles from the 50's<sup>1</sup>—being able to efficiently download is an important component of summer operations. Replacement of the triple chairlift should be considered if the Snow Bowl wants to fully capitalize on its capacity and potential as a summer tourism destination.

Considering the winter operation, if the lift cannot function due to maintenance needs or other issues, access to terrain would be severely impaired. While new chairlifts are a significant investment, there is a concern that maintenance and operation costs will continue to increase and become more frequent as the lift infrastructure ages. Operating a ski area is primarily an uphill transportation business. A new chairlift will be necessary in the future in order to sustain operations. Having a chairlift that also provides opportunities for expanded offerings will help support the long-term viability of the Snow Bowl.

The tennis courts and exercise equipment near the ball fields are examples of recreation amenities that have not seen regular maintenance and have fallen into disrepair. This reduces the overall usability and vitality of the park, creating both functional and aesthetic impacts.

Other outbuildings, such as the Rockport Hotel near the toboggan area, are not well utilized and ill-equipped to support events and programs.

### ACTIVITY OFFERINGS

The Snow Bowl offers 7.8 miles of hiking and biking trails, some of which connect into regional trail systems that can be accessed via the Snow Bowl. The existing trails at the Snow Bowl offer great views and have become a popular mountain biking venue. While the trails are maintained by both staff and volunteers, the trails were not designed with current mountain bike trail development best practices in mind. Many of the trails have poor drainage and steep grades and are not accessible to novice riders. Mountain bike trail improvement and development at the Snow Bowl was first explored in 2012 by Mark Hayes of Highland Trails and most recently in the 2025 Ragged Mountain Recreation Area Trail Master Plan prepared by the Outdoor Sports Institute. Both plans document issues with the existing trails and recommend comprehensive realignments and reconstruction. Parks & Recreation staff are currently in the process of applying for funding for the first phase of trail development and hope to break ground in 2026.

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1 [10 of the Oldest Ski Lifts Still Operating in North America](#), Powder, 2025



# Market Context



## VISITOR MARKET

Maine is a thriving tourist destination—attracting 14.8 million visitors in 2024, over half of which visit in the summer and.<sup>2,3</sup> According to Placer.AI— a cell phone mobility data aggregator, Knox County alone sees over 1.2 million out of market visitors annually, approximately 66% of which visit between June and September.

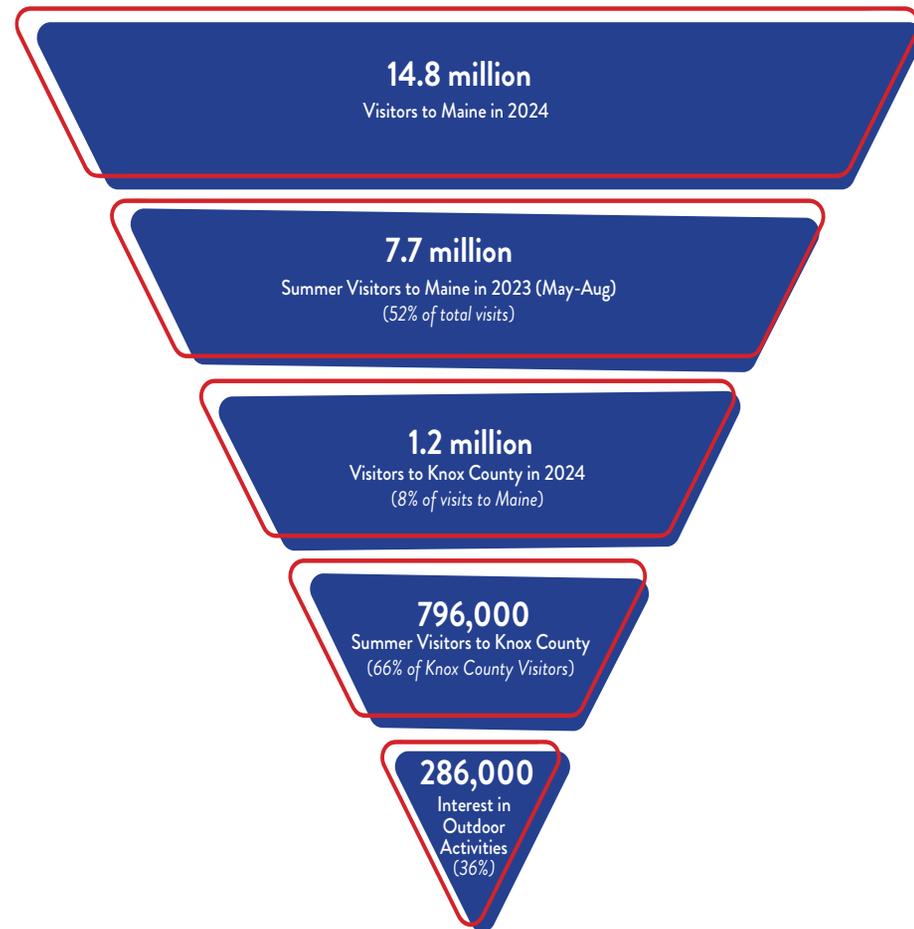
### VISITATION DRIVERS

Knox County and the Town of Camden have a significant swing in population and tourist traffic in the summer, aided by the popular Route 1 corridor and the area’s large bed base of seasonal homes, hotels, and short-term rentals. Other destinations in Maine influence visitor traffic in Knox County as well. In 2024, Acadia National Park saw over 3.8 million visitors.<sup>4</sup> In a recent visitor survey, 28% of visitors to the Acadia Region stated they had also visited Mid-Coast Maine in their travels.<sup>5</sup>

### VISITOR ACTIVITIES

Outdoor recreation opportunities and activities are a core part of the visitor journey. While top interests for summer visitors include food and beverage experiences (96%), entertainment (77%), and shopping (70%); outdoor activities (36%), sightseeing (33%), and active recreation (19%) score highly. These visitor interests are evident in visitation to Camden Hills State Park—which saw almost 200,000 visitors in 2024.<sup>6</sup>

### Summer Visitor Market



- <sup>2</sup> [2024 Maine Office of Tourism Highlights](#), Maine Office of Tourism, 2024
- <sup>3</sup> [Summer Visitor Tracking Report](#), Maine Office of Tourism, 2024
- <sup>4</sup> [Acadia National Park News Release](#), National Park Service, 2024
- <sup>5</sup> [Downeast & Acadia 2024 Summer Visitor Tracking Report](#), Maine Office of Tourism, 2024
- <sup>6</sup> [20 Maine State Parks with the Most Visitors in 2024](#), Chris Sedenka, 2025



# MARKET CONTEXT - BY THE NUMBERS



*Maine Visitors*  
**7.7 Million**

Maine receives around 7.7 million visitors in the summer, each staying on average 4.5 nights during their trip.



*Camden Vehicle Trips*  
**1.65 Million**

Between June and September, approximately 1.65 million vehicle trips are recorded between Camden and Rockport.



*Downtown Camden Visitors*  
**3x-4x ↑**

According to Placer.AI mobile data, areas in Downtown Camden see between a 3x and 4x increase in traffic from winter/off-season to peak season. Only around 30% of these visitors are from Maine.



*Short-Term Rentals*  
**5,100**

Knox County hosts over 5,100 STRs. The Camden market area (which includes Vinalhaven) leads the region with 458 Short-Term rentals (STRs), while Rockport and Rockland have 403 combined.

## *Maine Visitor* Activity Interests



*Food & Beverage*  
**96%**



*Entertainment*  
**77%**



*Shopping*  
**70%**



*Outdoor Activities*  
**36%**



*Sightseeing*  
**33%**



*Active Recreation*  
**19%**

## TOURISM MARKET KEY TAKEAWAYS

Overall, the tourism market data illustrates intense seasonal demand and a large pool of out-of-market visitors. Visitor profiles indicate an eagerness for outdoor activities, sightseeing, and active recreation experiences – all of which may be offered by the Snow Bowl. Positioning the summer experience at the Snow Bowl as a must-do summer activity can pull visitors from the larger Maine tourism market and provide enticing activities from the overnight visitors staying in Knox County's short-term rental and seasonal housing base.

- **AUDIENCE** - The surge of summer visitors to Knox County, around 800,000 people, represents a large pool of potential customers, many of which are actively seeking outdoor recreation experiences during their time in Maine.
- **ACTIVITIES** - Visitors are looking for things to do, and are not concerned about spending money, as the top three activities of interest involve spending (food and beverage, entertainment, and shopping). There is an opportunity for recreation destinations to capture this discretionary spending, especially if paired with other activities of interest (sightseeing, entertainment and food and beverage experiences).
- **POSITION** - The Town of Camden, and the Snow Bowl, are well positioned to piggyback off visitation that is already happening in Maine. This means that the amenities at the Snow Bowl do not need to be the main purpose of a trip but instead add value to trips already happening.
- **LOCAL VISITORS** - The availability and quantity of seasonal housing and short-term rentals fuel repeat demand. With 20.5% of Knox County housing being seasonal and over 5,100 short-term rentals, visitors are embedded in the community for multiple days. This increases opportunities for repeat visitors during a stay and builds a loyal base of seasonal residents.
- **SPENDING POWER** - Most summer visitors are from out of state, increasing the amount of “new money” entering the local economy. Visitors from further away are often trying to make the most of their trip and are willing to spend on premium or unique local experiences.
- **PARTY COMPOSITION** - Travel parties to Maine are family and couple-heavy (36%), presenting an opportunity for bundled experiences.

## SCALE OF THE FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY

If just 1% of the summer visitors to Knox County (800,000 people) visited the Snow Bowl and spent \$40 on recreation and entertainment experiences, \$320,000 in revenue would be generated. At 2%, that revenue grows to \$640,000. This direct spending not only supports the Snow Bowl's bottom line but generates additional economic impact through indirect and induced spending.



## RECREATION MARKET

### Market Demand & Participation Trends

Maine's beauty and natural resources encourage participation in outdoor recreation. According to the Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), Maine residents participate in outdoor recreation activities at higher rates than national and regional averages—especially in camping, hunting, water-based sports, and snowmobiling. Overall, the top five activities that Maine residents reported participating in include hiking, biking, walking, swimming, and skiing. There is also strong interest in outdoor recreation programs and events. Events that received the most interest included self-guided educational hikes, outdoor festivals, outdoor skills workshops, and volunteering in park events. Key takeaways reported in the SCORP include considerations of age—Maine has the nation's oldest population, proximity—close to home recreation opportunities were very important to respondents, and programming—people want to experience the outdoors in a structured and communal setting.

According to the Outdoor Industry Association, national outdoor recreation participation is growing, but the frequency and intensity of outdoor recreation is decreasing. This means there are more recreationists who fall into the casual user group—those who like to get outside to unwind and relax, but who aren't going to thru hike or become advanced mountain bikers.<sup>7</sup>

The Snow Bowl can respond to these state and national recreation trends by providing a range of nature-based outdoor activities that provide introductory experiences for more casual users, structured programs that provide social and educational opportunities, and fun events such as outdoor festivals or skills workshops. The Snow Bowl should also not shy away from leaning in on trails as hiking, biking, and walking are the top three activities by participation.

<sup>7</sup> [2025 Outdoor Participation Trends Report](#), Outdoor Industry Association, 2025

## MOUNTAIN BIKING RECREATION PARTICIPATION

Mountain biking is gaining significant traction in Maine, with growing statewide and national interest. According to the Maine SCORP 2020-2025 report, mountain biking is one of the most underserved outdoor recreation activities in the state, with 9% of respondents expressing a need for more trails. Additionally, 37% of Mainers participate in bicycling, underscoring the demand for improved biking infrastructure. This trend aligns with national and regional growth, as the Outdoor Industry Association (2021) reports 8.69 million mountain bikers across the country, reflecting a robust and expanding market, with the average per visit spending for nonlocal mountain bikers around \$416 per visit.<sup>8</sup> In Maine, the sport's rising popularity is further evident through the presence of Mid-Coast Maine NEMBA (New England Mountain Bike Association) chapters, high school mountain biking teams, and organized clinics, all contributing to a thriving biking community.

With mountain biking ranked as the most lacking outdoor recreation activity in Maine (9% of survey respondents, Maine SCORP), there is a clear gap in infrastructure that Camden Snow Bowl could help fill by developing a more balanced and accessible trail network for all skill levels.

<sup>8</sup> [Economic Benefits of Mountain Biking](#), Trust for Public Land, 2024

## VISITATION POTENTIAL



### NATIONAL MTB PARTICIPATION

**8.69 Million**

(2.5% of U.S. population)

#### MTB BIKE PARTICIPATION (5 HRS)

**1.96 Million**

(5.3%\* of population within 5 hours of Camden)

#### MTB BIKE PARTICIPATION (3HRS)

**109,700**

(5.3% of population within 3 hours)

#### POTENTIAL VISITATION

**10,800-30,000**

(considering capture rates and frequency)



### NATIONAL HIKING PARTICIPATION

**63 Million**

(19% of U.S. population)

#### MAINE HIKING PARTICIPATION

**940,000**

(69% of Maine population)

#### HIKING PARTICIPATION (1.5 HRS)

**397,700**

(69% of population within 1.5 hours)

#### POTENTIAL VISITATION

**6,000-36,000**

(considering capture rates and frequency)

*\*The 2020-2025 Maine SCORP reports that 37% of Mainers participate in bicycling (mountain, road, gravel, etc.) but does not report a participation number specifically for mountain biking. To identify an estimate, a ratio of national mountain bikers (2.5%) to overall bicyclists (17.3%) from Outdoor Industry Association data was applied.*



## CASE STUDIES

There are several examples of recreation areas and facilities attracting visitors and generating significant returns in direct and secondary economic impacts (indirect and induced) spending. Further, these examples show a strong willingness to travel, and pay, for high quality and unique recreation experiences.

### MOUNTAIN BIKING

#### MOUNTAIN BIKING ECONOMIC IMPACT POTENTIAL

**In recent years, the economic impact of mountain biking has been studied in communities around the country as the sport continues to grow and large investments are made in trail infrastructure. In 2025, the Trust for Public Land and the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) conducted a review of around 50 economic impact studies related to mountain biking and found that some studies report trip spending of over \$1,000, and that the average spend per trip is \$416. Often, these studies consider only travel-related spending and do not include any trail use fees or tickets.**

#### Kingdom Trails

In Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, the Kingdom Trail network provides over 100 miles of non-motorized multi-use trails. These trails are regionally and nationally known, named the best trail network in North America by Bike Magazine. The trail network is hosted on a complex collection of public and private land parcels, and trail access is managed by a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Kingdom Trails Association sells both day and annual memberships for trail access. Adult daily memberships are \$20 and annual memberships are \$125. Visitors aged 7 and under or 70 and older can participate for free. A 2016 study found that

the trail system hosted an estimated 94,000 visitors annually and an average visitor daily spend of \$176. This amounted to approximately \$10.3 million in total economic impact. Further, visitors to Kingdom Trails continue to grow, with membership sales increasing an average of 15% per year, reaching 150,000 members in 2019.

#### Mountain Bike Trail Events

New research from West Virginia University helps quantify the economic impact of mountain biking events, through the economic impacts of gear, food, and travel spending associated with high-school mountain biking events. This study found that over the course of five events, travel spending associated with the 1,100 riders generated approximately \$326,630 in total economic impact and \$28,694 in state and local taxes.

#### Angel Fire Bike Park

Angel Fire Bike Park is located in northern New Mexico. In 2011, the resort added to their existing singletrack and technical downhill trail network with a trail development budget of \$85,000. Even with this relatively small investment, interest grew from 1,000 rider visits to 4,000. The benefits of this new activity were immediately felt as the Village of Angel Fire reported around \$100,000 in increased tax revenue.<sup>9</sup> Within four years, participation increased to 14,000 riders and bike park revenue outpaced revenue earnings from all other resort activities combined. As of 2025, the bike park has over 60 miles of lift-served bike trails and sells adult day tickets for \$70 and season passes for \$450.

<sup>9</sup> [Rolling Out the Green Carpet](#), Ski Area Management, 2015

## TRAIL-BASED EVENTS & FUNDRAISING

### Catamount Trail Series

Located in Williston, Vermont, the Catamount Outdoor Family Center hosts a weekly running and mountain-bike race series. From mid-May through early September, there is a Tuesday trail running race and a Wednesday mountain bike race. Tickets for the race series range from \$15-\$25 depending on activity and age group, and around 80-100 people participate in the weekly running races and 60-80 mountain bikers in the weekly bike races.

### Friends of the Ferry

In Burlington, Vermont—a small section of the Colchester Causeway Trail is supported by the Local Motion Bike Ferry—a free service that transports bikers and their bikes across a 200-foot section of the causeway. To support this free (donation suggested) service, Local Motion, a local non-profit, launches a Friend of the Ferry campaign. With a \$50+ donation, riders receive raffle tickets, and a colorful bike band and sticker that identifies them as a member of the biking community and supporter of this service. The campaign has a donation goal of \$20,000 that covers staffing, maintenance, and upkeep – allowing Local Motion to provide ferry services for free.



Catamount Trail Running Race Series



Catamount Mountain Bike Race Series



## ZIP LINES & CANOPY TOURS

Zip lines are a popular amenity for outdoor recreations destinations that have suitable topography, scenic views, and bright fall foliage. In New England, there are around 19 zip line operations, with over 200 individual zip lines between them. Some zip lines offer the thrill of high speeds while others offer scenic and serene views. As ski areas began to supplement winter revenue with summer operations, many looked to zip lines for revenue generation. In 2011, Gunstock opened the ZipTour™ (which at the time included the longest zip line in the continental U.S.). The ZipTour™ includes 5 spans and covers around 1.6 miles. Within a year, the General Manager of Gunstock Mountain Resort reported that the ZipTour™ had become an anchor attraction for the resort. They reported that between late-May and mid-October, they had around 16,500 ZipTour™ visitors and grossed over \$1 million in sales. Those numbers quickly grew— by 2013 Gunstock reported around 30,000 people and \$2 million in sales related to the ZipTour™, at times putting more than 350 visitors through the tour in a day.<sup>10</sup> As of 2025, the ZipTour™ is still in operation in the same configuration as 2011, and tickets cost \$85 per person.

<sup>10</sup> [Profitability](#), ZipRider, 2013



Gunstock Mountain ZipTour

## Canopy Tours

Canopy tours are another popular amenity for outdoor adventure areas. Canopy tours utilize forested areas to take participants through treetops via a connected series of aerial suspension bridges, zip lines, rappels, platforms, and ropes courses. Canopy tours can be programmed to be instructor-led or more individual-led and they can include great opportunities for natural history and ecological interpretation. The Bretton Woods Canopy Tour, located at the Omni Mountain Washington Resort, is well known and incredibly scenic. Offering great views of the Presidential Range and Mount Washington Valley, the tour is a roughly 3-hour guided experience, the tour includes nine zip lines, two sky bridges, and three rappels. Current pricing for the Canopy Tour is \$119-\$129 depending on the day.

Current innovation within this space is evolving the experience in several ways. The recently opened “Zipline Coaster” at Mont Sutton (Quebec) combines the “hanging” experience of the canopy tour with the rail technology of a mountain coaster. Riders hang from a rail in a seated harness, experiencing an uninterrupted ride through the forest. Similarly, a “cable-to-rail” attraction combines straight spans of cable with sections of rail to create seamless corners for a continuous canopy experience. Uniquely, the harnesses are attached to a motor, allowing for uphill travel. The first North American application of the cable-to-rail is under construction at Gore Mountain (New York).

## ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS

One of the recent evolutions in the ski area summer operations space is the creation of unique Adventure Playground areas within forested areas. Nestled in the woods, with a combination of playground, aerial adventure course, climbing towers, tree houses, netted trampoline space, canopy walks, and adventure walks/scavenger hunts, these unique attractions – each an original design harnessing the natural features of the site – provide an alternative, family-oriented, adventure experience of the natural forested environments found at ski areas.

**Blue Mountain Resort** (Ontario) offers the Canopy Climb Net Adventure—an adventure play structure that includes towers, trampolines, suspension bridges, and tunnels. A full-access ticket to the Adventure Park ranges from \$48 to \$77 depending on age and how far in advance tickets are purchased. Limited access ticket pricing ranges from \$30 to \$35 depending on age. Blue Mountain has built a reputation around family-friendly adventure, and its robust and interactive summer offering is a clear example of this commitment.

**Anakeesta** (Gatlinburg, TN). Anakeesta’s Adventure Park offers a series of interconnected nature-based adventure activities aimed at a family-oriented experience of the natural mountain environment. Aimed at kids (and the young at heart), Bird-venture includes colorful life-sized birdhouses (treehouses), a dozen interactive adventure zones, seven giant slides that wind down the mountain. The adjacent Treehouse Adventure Play Area lets kids play in the trees, with challenging physical and educational elements designed to build strength and confidence. Combined with the treetop skywalk the play area offers a number of interconnected suspension bridges that wind through the forest, and the observation tower provides scenic views of all activities. Families can be entertained for hours as they experience the forest in fun and unique ways.

**Uplå** (Quebec and Ontario) is a trampoline-based activity that invites participants to “step out of the ordinary for an extraordinary adventure as you leap into the heart of nature in the largest outdoor trampoline in North America. Jump, slide, climb and laugh as you walk through a world of nets and a beautiful village perched in the treetops.” Based on 2-hour sessions, the activity is positioned to attract both “adventurous thrill seekers or those simply looking to recharge their batteries in a unique setting”; a way to connect with nature in an active and fun way.



Anakeesta Adventure Park



Blue Mountain Resort Canopy Climb Net Adventure



# The Opportunity



The Snow Bowl requires additional revenue to offset operational costs and become a financially sustainable year-round operation. As demand for outdoor recreation continues to grow both locally and nationally, the Snow Bowl is well-positioned to support community recreation needs while benefiting from regional tourism and seasonal visitors. By thoughtfully expanding programs, events, and amenities, the Snow Bowl can enhance its value to residents while capturing a portion of visitor spending to support financial sustainability. This balance—honoring the Snow Bowl’s community roots while leveraging its natural assets and appeal to visitors—is at the heart of its long-term success and the focus of this planning effort.

### **HARNESSING SNOW BOWL’S APPEAL**

Parks and recreation facilities like the Snow Bowl, while generally designed and built with community needs in mind, also provide benefits to visitors and tourists. Camden, and Mid-Coast Maine more broadly, see a large volume of visitor traffic in the summer months. These visitors are looking for unique experiences, scenic views, and family-friendly activities. The Snow Bowl’s wooded slopes, trail network, stunning ocean views, concerts and other events are appealing to solo travelers, groups, and families that are visiting the region in the summer.

### **SEIZING THE POTENTIAL**

Because of the active and enthusiastic local community that already use the Snow Bowl in the summer, the existence of high volumes of visitor traffic, and the appeal of the unique topography and landscape; building on the recreation programs, events, and facilities offered at the Snow Bowl has significant revenue generating potential.

At its core, this potential expansion and improvement at the Snow Bowl is in service of increased community value, increased cost recovery potential, and ultimately improved financial sustainability of the operation.

#### **COST RECOVERY**

**Cost recovery refers to generating revenue that offsets operating expenses and reduces reliance on taxpayer funding. It is common for parks and recreation facilities to have cost recovery targets, although none have been officially established for the Snow Bowl. Revenue can be collected through fees for programs, facility rentals, and other activities. Typically, cost recovery targets for more developed recreation facilities such as swimming pools, ice rinks, and recreation centers are higher than for facilities such as playgrounds, pocket parks, and open spaces. Recreation departments may also establish cost recovery goals by evaluating who benefits from the provision of specific facilities and programs. For example, facilities and programs that benefit the entire community have lower cost recovery targets than ones designed for specific individuals or groups (adult sports leagues, art classes, etc.).**



## ACHIEVING BALANCE

Determining the right balance between community and visitor use is foundational to evaluating the mix of facilities, programs, and events that may drive additional revenue generation at the Snow Bowl. All recreation areas sit on a sliding scale of community and visitor orientation depending on the type and scale of amenities. On the “Community” side of the spectrum are recreation spaces such as pocket parks, open spaces, and small playgrounds—things that provide important gathering areas primarily (though not exclusively) for community use. On the “Visitor” side, you have recreation spaces that are attractive to visitors such as water parks or amusement parks.

The Snow Bowl is currently predominantly community oriented, though the winter skiing opportunity and Toboggan Nationals attract visitors from outside of the community and region, and some summer visitors use the trail network and attend the summer concerts series.

First and foremost, development at the Snow Bowl should continue to support community use and access. However, covering the costs of developing, maintaining, and staffing additional recreation amenities would require increased usage fees and/or increased subsidies from taxpayer dollars. Alternatively, these costs may be offset by revenue generated by visitors.

Importantly, if attracting additional tourism visitation is the goal, the amenities selected for the Snow Bowl should be of the scale, type, and quality that align with market demand while not upsetting community use and value of the area.

## MAINTAINING FOUNDATIONAL PRIORITIES

For the Snow Bowl to address the community needs and market opportunities identified in this analysis, the Plan responds to the following three foundational priorities.

### CONSIDER COMMUNITY FIRST

The Snow Bowl is an important outdoor recreation hub for Camden and the surrounding community. The unique, year-round recreation opportunities it provides, scenic views, and community orientation are attractive to those looking for a family-friendly outdoor adventure. The Snow Bowl also provides residents a sort of “relief valve” to offset the crowded summer experience in downtown Camden.

To uphold these important community values, future development at the Snow Bowl should prioritize:

- **Connectivity.** Connect to other key locations within the community: trails, recreation areas, schools, downtown, etc.
- **Accessibility and Inclusivity.** Provide accessible amenities to support family-friendly use.
- **Multi-Generational Appeal.** Provide community-oriented recreation facilities that support high-quality experiences and allow for flexible use for a broad spectrum of outdoor enthusiasts, from the young to the young-at-heart.

### SHOWCASE UNIQUE FEATURES

The Snow Bowl offers a unique combination of natural and manmade features: the forest, the fields, the pond, a robust trail network, lodge facilities, a mountain with trail and lift-served access to the summit.

The Snow Bowl's location and unique topographic and natural resource offerings shape the current and future uses of the site. To best align with the existing environmental characteristics and manmade facilities, future development at the Snow Bowl should prioritize:

- **Activities that Fit.** The development of new activities and amenities should respond to the unique characteristics of the place: the mountain, the lifts, the trails, the fields, the ponds, and the broader network of publicly accessible preserved lands.
- **Consistent Character.** Size and theming of the built environment should respond to the character of the site, and should utilize materials, colors, and textures that are found within the Ragged Mountain environment.

## BALANCE VISITOR USE

While the majority of Snow Bowl users come from within Camden and neighboring towns, the Mid-Coast Maine region, including the town of Camden, attracts visitors from across the state and across the country. Recreation amenities at the Snow Bowl have the potential to attract visitors who are looking for ways to get outdoors, enjoy the scenery, and spend time with their friends and family. Further, state and national recreation participation is increasing, meaning visitors are increasingly likely to be looking for ways to get outdoors. With this context in mind, responsive development at the Snow Bowl could prioritize:

- **Visibility.** Provide clear signage and accessible recreation amenities
- **Education.** Protect the natural environment of the site by providing educational signage and messaging related to responsible recreation
- **Destination Appeal.** Provide unique activities and amenities that draw visitors
- **Cost Recovery.** Create revenue-generating opportunities to capture visitor spending that contributes to increasing the long-term viability of the Snow Bowl.

These foundational values will help guide the Snow Bowl in striking a thoughtful balance between preserving its role as a beloved community asset and harnessing its potential as a regional destination. By aligning new amenities and programs with both local values and market demand, the Snow Bowl can enhance recreational opportunities for residents while generating sustainable revenue through visitor engagement. This approach ensures that growth will strengthen—not compromise—the character of the site and the quality of experiences it provides. The following plan concept builds on these priorities, outlining a clear path forward for development that is responsive to community needs, celebrates the Snow Bowl's unique natural features, and positions it as a vibrant, financially sustainable hub for year-round recreation.



# The Plan



## CONCEPT AMENITIES

This plan includes the locations of specific activities and facilities throughout the Snow Bowl and articulates how it functions as a place, including operational considerations and an exploration of programs and events that drive visitation.

The plan includes three main phases: Short-Term, Long-Term, and Aspirational.

- **Short-Term (1-5 years):** Parts of the plan that may be implemented in the near future, with minimal investment. This also includes advancing the additional planning, design, and fundraising necessary to implement Long-Term projects.
- **Long-Term (5-10 years):** Parts of the plan that require more planning/design and investment prior to implementation. These are projects that are focused expanding the summer operation through additional activities, facilities, programs and events.
- **Aspirational:** The process considers a third phase that is not time-specific, accounting for opportunities that may be implemented at some point in the future if deemed feasible and achievable, and in alignment with the community desire to encourage visitor use of the Snow Bowl.

### NEED FOR FURTHER DESIGN

**Additional detailed planning and design would be undertaken prior to implementing each of the proposed improvements outlined in the plan. As vendors in the outdoor recreation space continue to innovate, new activities may be considered and added to the Plan. As the operation evolves, and market conditions change, the financial metrics would be revisited and adjusted.**



## KEY

-  Primary Wayfinding Kiosk Location
-  Secondary Wayfinding Location
-  Primary Pedestrian Circulation Path
-  Bike Skills
-  Potential Connection
-  Activity / Event Zone
-  Chair Lift (Winter Only)
-  Chair Lift
-  Snow Bowl Property Line
-  Coastal Mountain Land Trust Property

## BUILDINGS

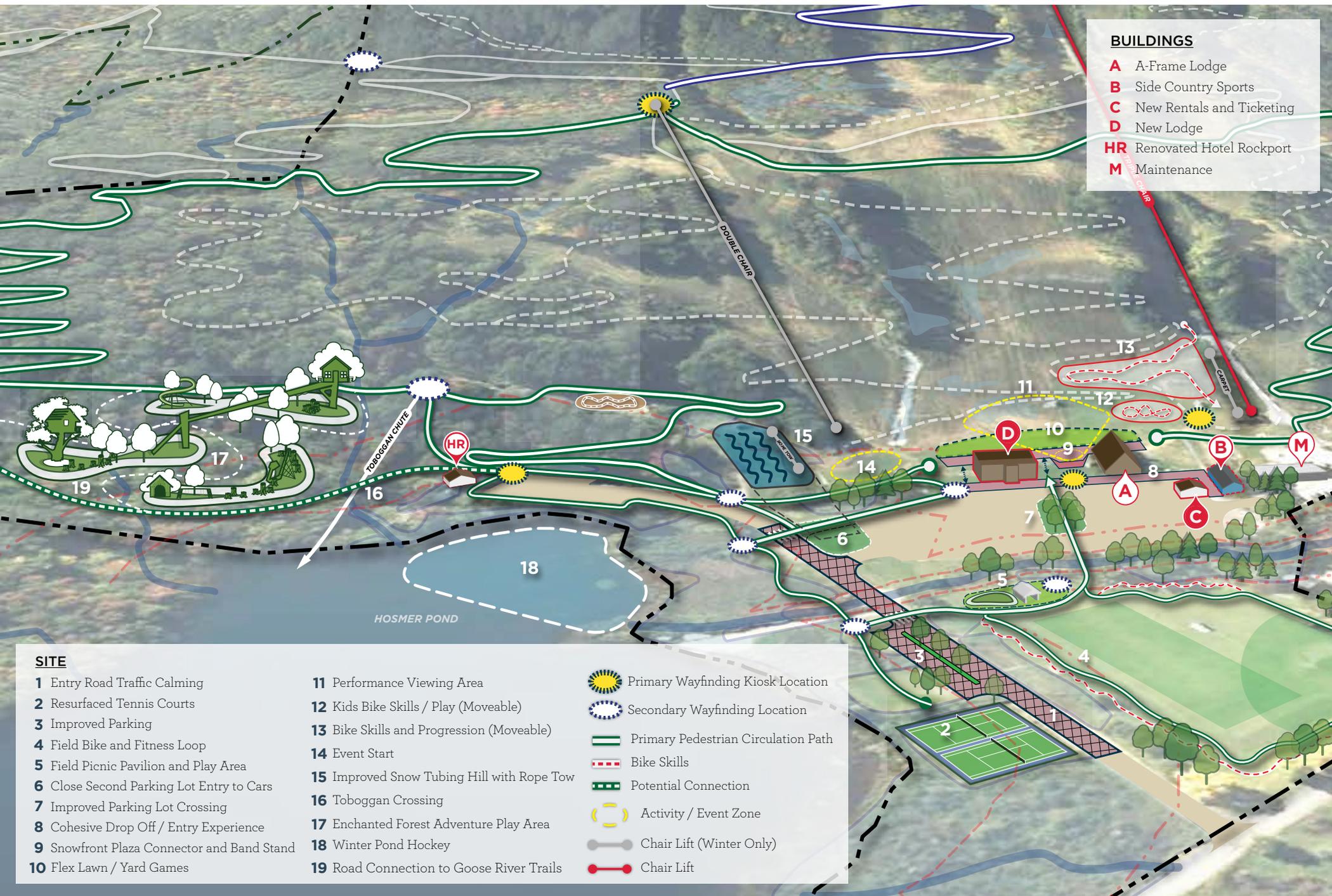
- A** A-Frame Lodge
- B** Retail
- C** New Rentals and Ticketing
- D** New Lodge
- E** Mountain Top Facility
- HR** Hotel Rockport
- M** Maintenance

## SITE

- 1 Double Summit Hiking Loop
- 2 Triple Summit Hiking Route
- 3 Scenic Mountain Top Experience  
(Cable-to-Rail Attraction)

## ICON KEY

-  ADA Access
-  Biking
-  Downhill Mountain Biking
-  Field Sports
-  Fishing
-  Food and Beverage
-  Hiking
-  Music and Events
-  Parking
-  Pavilion
-  Picnic Area
-  Play
-  Repairs
-  Restrooms
-  Retail
-  Scenic Lift Rides / Lift Served Biking
-  View Point
-  Walking
-  Water Access
-  Yard Games



**BUILDINGS**

- A** A-Frame Lodge
- B** Side Country Sports
- C** New Rentals and Ticketing
- D** New Lodge
- HR** Renovated Hotel Rockport
- M** Maintenance

**SITE**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Entry Road Traffic Calming</li> <li>2 Resurfaced Tennis Courts</li> <li>3 Improved Parking</li> <li>4 Field Bike and Fitness Loop</li> <li>5 Field Picnic Pavilion and Play Area</li> <li>6 Close Second Parking Lot Entry to Cars</li> <li>7 Improved Parking Lot Crossing</li> <li>8 Cohesive Drop Off / Entry Experience</li> <li>9 Snowfront Plaza Connector and Band Stand</li> <li>10 Flex Lawn / Yard Games</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 Performance Viewing Area</li> <li>12 Kids Bike Skills / Play (Moveable)</li> <li>13 Bike Skills and Progression (Moveable)</li> <li>14 Event Start</li> <li>15 Improved Snow Tubing Hill with Rope Tow</li> <li>16 Toboggan Crossing</li> <li>17 Enchanted Forest Adventure Play Area</li> <li>18 Winter Pond Hockey</li> <li>19 Road Connection to Goose River Trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Primary Wayfinding Kiosk Location</li> <li> Secondary Wayfinding Location</li> <li> Primary Pedestrian Circulation Path</li> <li> Bike Skills</li> <li> Potential Connection</li> <li> Activity / Event Zone</li> <li> Chair Lift (Winter Only)</li> <li> Chair Lift</li> </ul>
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## CONSIDERING POTENTIAL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

For each activity, program, and event proposed, a summary of the potential financial performance is provided. Each table includes five core metrics: estimated visits, revenue, labor expenses, general expenses, and net profit.

### Phasing

For each proposed initiative, these metrics are assigned to one of the three phases based on implementation complexity and capital requirements: Short-Term, Long-Term or Aspirational. Each phase provides the Snow Bowl with a grounded expectation of the potential annual performance of the five metrics.

For each phase, **low** and **high** values are provided, reflecting a range of visitation and pricing scenarios, with the high end of the range representing what is feasible – and achievable given market demand. The low-end range shows the impact on the financial performance should the market-driven goals not be achieved. Realizing the high end of the range will require the development of a marketing strategy, continued coordination with partner organizations, and investment in staffing in order to deliver the proposed guest experience and continue to attract people to the Snow Bowl.

### Visitation Projections

Visitation projections are derived from considerations of the degree of community and visitor use, the overall market demand, and site-level and/or activity-specific capacity constraints. Because many amenities and programs have fixed costs related to staffing and overhead, adequate visitor volumes and pricing levels play a key role in determining overall profitability. It is also important to note that the revenue projections are not inclusive of potential revenue from the commissioned food and beverage (F&B) operation.

### Revenue

Pricing and visitation form the basis of the revenue figures. Pricing considers the blend of community-oriented use and visitor/tourism use. Community-oriented use assumes conservative pricing, and visitor/tourism use is based upon market-demand pricing assumptions. A range of pricing for both community and visitor use was generated to consider a broad range of revenue potential.

### Expense

Expense costs calculated include labor and general overhead. Labor expense assumptions include the addition of both paid positions as well as volunteer labor support for certain programs. Because of the unique accounting model between the Snow Bowl and the broader Parks and Recreation budget, 50% of the fixed annual salary cost associated with full-time positions required to manage the expanded offerings are allocated to the Parks and Recreation budget. General expenses, including utilities, fuel, banking/processing fees, insurance, and marketing are modeled at a fixed rate of 17% of the revenue associated with the activity, event or program.

### Net Profit

Net profit shows the financial opportunity of each initiative in each phase, assuming all other financial projections are realized.



## ACTIVITIES

### Tubing

The tubing hill at the Snow Bowl has been around since the early 2000's. In 2025, a new surface lift was added to the tubing hill and will start operations in the 25/26 winter season. Tubing provides a fun and engaging family-friendly non-ski activity at the Snow Bowl.

In past seasons, the tubing hill attracted approximately 400 visits. The addition of the new surface lift will increase the attractiveness of this non-ski winter activity and the operations capacity. Given the high costs associated with labor, it is important that the tubing be effectively marketed and drive more than 2,000 visits to breakeven. Additional visits will result in a modest profit.



#### TUBING REVENUE POTENTIAL

Tubing	Short-Term	
	Low	High
Visits	1,500	4,000
Revenue	\$22,500	\$80,000
Labor	\$40,434	\$40,434
Expenses	\$3,825	\$13,600
Net Profit	\$(21,759)	\$25,966

## Trail Running & Hiking

The 2025 Ragged Mountain Recreation Area Trails Master Plan involves the redevelopment of approximately 13 miles of trails within the Snow Bowl area, of which 7 are open to hikers. The concepts in this plan show two main hiking corridors that provide users with a loop hiking experience with opportunities for scenic views and pause points.

Similar to mountain biking, trail runners and hikers using the existing trails will be encouraged to purchase a single-use or season pass or donate to support trail maintenance and upkeep. There is an opportunity for trail running and hiking to generate a modest profit for the Snow Bowl through passes and donations.

Labor costs are modeled at \$0, assuming trail maintenance would be volunteer-led and paid labor would be covered by the Parks and Recreation budget. Other operating expenses are estimated at 17% of the revenue generated in each phase.



### TRAIL RUNNING & HIKING REVENUE POTENTIAL

Trail Running/Hiking	Short-Term	
	Low	High
Visits	2,500	5,000
Revenue	\$4,000	\$20,000
Labor	\$0	\$0
Expenses	\$680	\$3,400
Net Profit	\$3,320	\$16,600



### Play Area

A family-friendly play area is envisioned near the sports fields in the Snow Bowl base area alongside a multi-use pavilion. This play area would provide an engaging environment for kids and families who may be looking for more developed play structure or something to do while other members of their family are elsewhere on site. This amenity would enhance the Snow Bowl's appeal to the community, as there are few playgrounds in the area and complements the other free of charge park amenities that exist on the site.



## Scenic Lift Rides

Riding a lift is a novel experience for non-skiers, offering an exciting way to reach the top of the mountain. This offering broadens accessibility by opening up the mountain, and the scenic view, to a wider audience. Summer lift rides also provide flexibility on how the Snow Bowl is experienced, visitors can take the lift up and hike down, others may hike up and want to take the lift down.

Currently, the Snow Bowl operates the lift for Fall Foliage lift rides and sees approximately 1,800-2,000 riders. In the Short-Term and Long-Term, there is opportunity to operate the existing chairlift more frequently in coordination with events such as races or festivals.

In the Aspirational phase, the lift is replaced and operated more frequently over the summer months. Revenue and expenses for the Aspirational phase assume the lift is operating five days a week.

The Short-Term increased programming of scenic lift rides without the addition of a new lift provides the Snow Bowl with a modest contribution in net profit whereas the opportunity to expand this offering through the installation of a new lift provides a significant boost in net profit.



### LIFT RIDES REVENUE POTENTIAL

Lift Rides	Short-Term		Long-Term		Aspirational	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
<b>Visits</b>	3,000	4,000	3,000	4,000	13,000	16,000
<b>Revenue</b>	\$45,000	\$80,000	\$45,000	\$80,000	\$245,000	\$380,000
<b>Labor</b>	\$25,491	\$25,491	\$25,491	\$25,491	\$98,625	\$98,625
<b>Expenses</b>	\$7,650	\$13,600	\$7,650	\$13,600	\$41,650	\$64,600
<b>Net Profit</b>	\$11,859	\$40,909	\$11,859	\$40,909	\$104,725	\$216,775



## Mountain Biking

As described in the 2025 Ragged Mountain Recreation Area Trails Master Plan, the existing trail network is in need of redesign to create more sustainable trails and enhance opportunities for growth and progression. The new and modified trail alignments outlined in the 2025 Trails Master Plan will also have the added benefit of reducing erosion, enhancing environmental outcomes and user experiences.

This plan includes approximately 13 miles of hiking and biking trails, with 6.2 miles of directional bike-only trails to/from mid-mountain and from the summit for optimal mountain biking experience. These trails would be developed in phases, with the full build out planned to be completed by 2028. Once completed, the redeveloped trail system will substantially elevate levels of regional interest—as there are few mountain bike optimized trail systems.

Mountain biking at the Snow Bowl would be further supported by the development of a bike skills area near the existing base lodge. This skills area would be constructed with temporary features (to allow for easy removal before the winter season) and provide an opportunity for bikers to practice their technique, balance, and form.

In the Short-Term phase, mountain bikers using the existing trails will be encouraged to purchase a single-use or season pass or donate to support trail maintenance and upkeep. This builds off of the examples from Kingdom Trails and the Friends of the Ferry which demonstrate that people are willing to pay and show their support for high quality trail experiences. As visitation grows in the Long-Term phase, so does revenue generated by seasons pass sales, driven by the completion of the proposed trail upgrades and expansion, coupled with greater awareness and improved reputation as a mountain biking destination.

Labor costs are modeled at \$0, assuming bike patrol would be volunteer-run and paid labor would be covered by the Parks and Recreation budget. Other operating expenses are estimated at 17% of the revenue generated in each phase.

Based on these assumptions, there is an opportunity in the Short-Term to generate a modest profit, with a growing opportunity once the planned trail network – and Snow Bowl’s reputation as a mountain biking destination is established.

### MOUNTAIN BIKING REVENUE POTENTIAL

MTB	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	Low	High	Low	High
<b>Visits</b>	2,250	4,500	4,250	10,500
<b>Revenue</b>	\$3,750	\$15,000	\$13,750	\$75,000
<b>Labor</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Expenses</b>	\$638	\$2,550	\$2,338	\$12,750
<b>Net Profit</b>	\$3,113	\$12,450	\$11,413	\$62,250





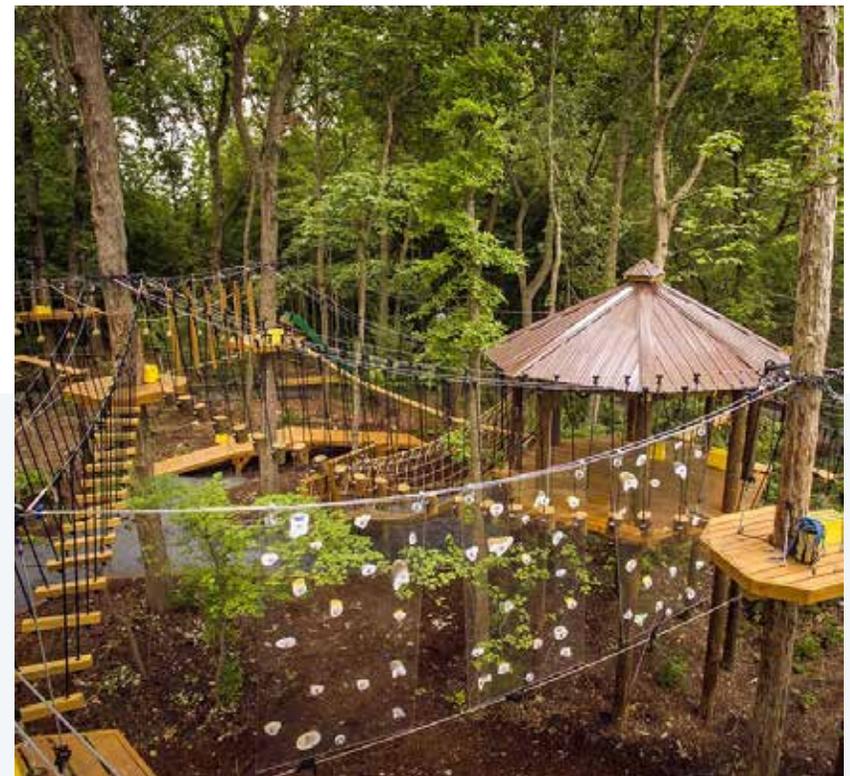


### Enchanted Forest Adventure Playground

The wooded slopes surrounding “Tobogganville” have a unique and appealing character. Building on this, an adventure playground would combine multiple activities into a single, engaging structure—offering something for everyone. This interactive play area, designed to occupy participants for an extended period of time, might feature a playground, aerial adventure course, climbing towers, tree houses, netted trampoline space, slides, canopy walks, and adventure walks/ scavenger hunts, creating a versatile space that appeals to all ages. Designed for self-guided fun, it would focus on simple, harness-free activities that require minimal staffing, keeping it accessible and low-maintenance.

The installation of the Enchanted Forest Adventure Playground in the Long-Term results in a large boost in visitation predominantly from visitors/tourists to the park. All visitors will purchase a single use or family pass, with reduced pricing offered to Camden families. This amenity is planned to operate throughout the summer and will be staffed by one paid employee.

The Enchanted Forest Adventure Playground is envisioned to be of the scale and quality to pull visitors from the existing tourism activity in the region and has the potential to generate significant profit for the Snow Bowl.



#### ENCHANTED FOREST REVENUE POTENTIAL

Enchanted Forest	Long-Term	
	Low	High
Visits	13,500	35,000
Revenue	\$58,750	\$260,000
Labor	\$14,386	\$14,386
Expenses	\$9,988	\$44,200
Net Profit	\$34,376	\$201,414





### Lift-Served Mountain Biking

Lift-served mountain biking is a relatively new activity that is growing alongside participation growth in mountain biking and innovations in bike-optimized trail design. While sometimes misconstrued as an activity geared towards advanced riders, lift-service can help riders of all ability levels grow and progress by supporting repetition and providing concentrated terrain variety.

As designed, the trail system includes several downhill routes from the summit; lift access would increase the appeal of these trails to include those less inclined to ride uphill. Once the trails are fully built out and there is a dedicated regional audience for mountain biking, the Snow Bowl has a great opportunity to expand its appeal as a mountain biking destination, while also increasing use of its lift-infrastructure and generating revenue through ticket sales.

Due to the capacity and capabilities of the existing triple chairlift, a new fixed-grip quad chairlift would be required to fully realize this opportunity. It falls into the Aspirational phase as the Snow Bowl should consider this activity only when it feels it has a dedicated audience and the capacity to manage this operation, and when capital is available for the lift.

Visitation for this activity will come from both locals and tourists; visitation assumptions have been built around the realistic market size of mountain biking in Maine and Camden’s capture rate of that rider pool. All participants will be required to purchase a single use or season pass product, with preferential pricing for locals.

Labor costs assume the lift-served component of the mountain biking operation will require seven additional staff members to sell tickets, assist in the loading and unloading of bikes, and augment the volunteer patrol and maintenance teams.

Operating expenses do not account for the expedited depreciation accumulated by running the lift for mountain biking in the summer.

While the investment in a new lift is significant, so too is the opportunity for revenue generated from its additional year-round operational capacity. A new lift will improve the Snow Bowl’s uphill capacity for the ski operation, lift-served mountain biking, scenic lift rides, and future mountain top Cable-to-Rail attraction—far exceeding the utility of the existing lift.

#### LIFT-SERVED REVENUE POTENTIAL

Lift-served MTB	Aspirational	
	Low	High
Visits	10,100	20,300
Revenue	\$321,500	\$1,009,000
Labor	\$74,723	\$74,723
Expenses	\$54,655	\$171,530
Net Profit	\$192,122	\$762,747





### Cable-to-Rail

The view of the harbor from the top of the Snow Bowl is an attraction unto itself. Providing visitors access to this view, and a unique experience while enjoying their time on the mountain, is a tremendous opportunity for the Snow Bowl.

Combining a series of straight spans with connective curves to create a closed loop system, the cable-to-rail zipline allows for a unique exploration of the scenic mountain top at the Snow Bowl. Configured as a closed system with both up and down sections, with the ability to get on or off at key junctions, this attraction creates a dynamic, scenic journey that offers more than a standard zip line or mountain coaster experience. Cable-to-rail systems have a harness that allows participants the ability to sit upright. These harnesses are attached to a motor, meaning the system does not have to be wholly gravity fed. These elements allow the cable-to-rail activity to provide the experience of a canopy tour without the skill barrier of zip lines.

Following the completion of the new lift in the Aspirational phase, the cable-to-rail mountain-top activity will provide access to a unique, scenic experience that takes advantage of its spectacular views of the coast. Tickets include a summit lift ride, and the attraction is assumed to run five days a week throughout the summer and be staffed by three employees.

Due to the ability of this attraction to command premium pricing and draw in tourist visitation, the cable-to-rail activity provides the Snow Bowl with a large boost to its net profit and represents a strong opportunity to establish financial sustainability.

#### CABLE-TO-RAIL REVENUE POTENTIAL

Cable-to-rail	Aspirational	
	Low	High
<b>Visits</b>	12,000	15,000
<b>Revenue</b>	\$960,000	\$1,500,00
<b>Labor</b>	\$27,469	\$27,469
<b>Expenses</b>	\$163,200	\$255,000
<b>Net Profit</b>	\$769,331	\$1,217,53





## FACILITIES

### Pavilion

Located near the sports fields, the pavilion will offer a unique hybrid space as an event venue and informal gathering area at the Snow Bowl. This amenity would offer informal day use to visitors looking for a shade structure or a more formal activity area for summer camps and other group events. The pavilion is envisioned as a wooden structure with picnic tables and outdoor cooking amenities.

The pavilion would act as an event venue option for the Snow Bowl, with small groups (+/- 50) able to rent the pavilion for a modest fee (\$50-100), adding a small contribution to the bottom line. The financial assessment assumes the Pavilion will be rented once a week throughout the summer.



#### PAVILLION RENTAL REVENUE POTENTIAL

Pavillion Rental	Aspirational	
	Low	High
Visits	550	1,100
Revenue	\$1,100	\$2,200
Labor	\$0	\$0
Expenses	\$187	\$374
Net Profit	\$913	\$1,826

## Base Lodge – Existing

Summer operation of the existing Base Lodge is focused on hosting events and activities that supplement the broader recreational and cultural offering of the Town. Events such as “Yoga on the Deck”, “Wednesdays in the Woods”, the Summer Concert Series, weddings, and family reunions continue to utilize the snow front, porch, and lodge seating areas.

The existing base lodge hosts around six to eight events per year, including weddings and other private events. This plan assumes the existing lodge will continue to be booked for events one to two times a month throughout the summer season. This venue option would host smaller groups (up to 100) while the new lodge would host larger groups (up to 200). The financial benefit of this is small, but it does increase the utilization of existing infrastructure that would otherwise sit idle, and increase the opportunity for food and beverage sales, without requiring additional capital investment. Moreover, wedding rental pricing is highly adaptable and can be raised in response to demand, which would significantly enhance the revenue potential of this initiative.



### VENUE RENTAL REVENUE POTENTIAL

Venue Rental – Existing Lodge	Long-Term	
	Low	High
Visits	300	600
Revenue	\$3,600	\$6,000
Labor	\$1,758	\$1,758
Expenses	\$612	\$1,020
Net Profit	\$1,230	\$3,222



### Base Lodge – New

A new lodge at the Snow Bowl, approximately 5,000 square feet, would provide important winter and summer guest services in a central location, greatly improve accessibility, and provide a much needed increase in indoor seating. This would elevate the winter experience at the Snow Bowl, increase event space for community use, and illustrate Camden’s commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. While there are opportunities in the short term to modify the existing lodge to address some accessibility concerns, and the two smaller structures (the existing 24’x60’ building that houses Sidecountry Sports, and the additional 24’x40’ building that will be erected this fall (2025)). The size of the existing lodge constrains its ability to meet the food and beverage needs of the winter operation and host larger events. The development of a new lodge was first explored in the 2006 Long Range Feasibility Study, and a new lodge was planned, but not constructed, as part of the renovations in 2013-2014. This new lodge is envisioned as a multi-story building that would provide increased space for F&B, administrative space, and other guest service space. Additionally, the new lodge would be built in accordance with ADA standards, providing increased accessibility to Snow Bowl offerings. While the 2006 plan largely considered the new lodge from a winter-use standpoint, this Plan envisions the space would be used in the summer months to host events, activities, and programs.

The development of a new lodge at the Snow Bowl will have a significant financial benefit to the operation. In addition to driving more food and beverage business in the winter (of which the Snow Bowl gets a small percentage from the concessionaire), the new lodge will be an attractive venue for mid-sized weddings (+/- 200) and private events. This plan conservatively assumes two such events a month between May and October, with venue rental pricing ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000. More events and higher venue charges may be possible.

This facility significantly enhances the revenue potential of the Snow Bowl’s event business by commanding higher prices and greater utilization, while still allowing other public-facing or other private events to take place concurrently at the existing lodge. In addition, the lodge addresses the current guest services capacity need of the winter ski operation.

#### VENUE RENTAL REVENUE POTENTIAL

Venue Rental – New Lodge	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	Low	High	Low	High
<b>Visits</b>	1,800	2,400	1,800	2,400
<b>Revenue</b>	\$30,000	\$60,000	\$30,000	\$60,000
<b>Labor</b>	\$7,032	\$7,032	\$7,032	\$7,032
<b>Expenses</b>	\$5,100	\$10,200	\$5,100	\$10,200
<b>Net Profit</b>	\$17,868	\$42,768	\$17,868	\$42,768

## Guest Services Considerations

The 2006 Long Range Feasibility Study by Horizons Engineering identified the Comfortable Carrying Capacity of the Snow Bowl as approximately 600 skiers. It also noted that considering this level of business, the guest service facilities were significantly undersized. Most importantly, the existing lodge does not meet ADA standards. Since then, some changes have been made to provide a better guest experience:

- A 60'x24' structure was established at the northwest end of the parking area to provide space for retail (operated by Sidecountry Sports), ski school and the race program.
- The original rental building was demolished (summer 2025) and will be replaced by a 40'x24' structure located on the northeast side of the lodge. This is adjacent to the carpet area, which is very convenient for beginner skiers who are most likely to rent equipment.

These affordable structures function well and provide much needed space. There still remains a need for additional food and beverage seating space and associated kitchen/back-of-house. Additionally, Sidecountry Sports has expressed a desire for a larger presence at the Snow Bowl, to serve both the winter and summer customers. Given the positive reputation, high quality service, and commitment that Sidecountry Sports brings to the Snow Bowl, this increased presence would be of great benefit to the Snow Bowl.

- This plan considers the remaining guest services needs within the context of year-round operations. This includes:
- Retaining the 60'x24' structure and transitioning it into dedicated retail space.
- Retaining the new 40'x24' structure to continue serving as the rental shop and ticketing.
- Adding new lodge space. The new lodge space will provide additional seating, food service area expansion, ticketing and rental space, race timing capabilities, and space for additional events and programming. The lodge would have two floors at the same level as the existing lodge, providing universal access to both floors of both buildings. The upper level would accommodate 200 additional seats and associated kitchen/servery/back-of-house space. The lower level would accommodate ski school, additional administrative office space, and additional restrooms.



### Lift Replacement

Aging lifts, as with motor vehicles, require steady maintenance and replacement parts to maintain operations. Even with meticulous maintenance, lift reliability wanes over time, and the ability to find replacement components gets harder as technology changes over time. This can contribute to both expensive and time-intensive repairs that impact daily operations. The Summit lift, a fixed-grip triple and now 41 years old, is starting to show its age. It has been recommended that the downloading capacity be reduced to reduce strain. This reduced capacity limits its expanded use and revenue-generation potential.

Given the age of the existing lift and its limited downhill capacity, the plan does not propose extensive summer use beyond the expansion of the scenic lift ride business. To better support mountain-top activities, scenic lift-rides, and lift-served mountain biking, the Aspirational phase proposes an upgrade of the summit lift to a fixed-grip quad, with the intention of maximizing the use and revenue generation of the lift for summer operations, as well as improving the winter on-mountain guest experience, while significantly extending the lifespan of this valued asset. [See Chairlifts and Summer Operation in Operational Considerations for more information]

### Mountain-Top Guest Service Space

As the summit area sees increased use and attention as a result of the proposed activities and amenities, there will be a need for guest service space at the top of the mountain. This space would provide amenities such as an interpretive kiosk, ticket sales, small food and beverage offerings, and shelter from the elements. It is envisioned that this space would fit approximately 50 people.



## PROGRAMS

The trifecta of multi-season operations is activities, events, and programs. Programs at the Snow Bowl offer more structured ways to engage with the recreation area and encourage involvement in recreation activities from a broad spectrum of users. Programs can provide introductory experiences and encourage growth and progression, in addition to the social benefits of group activities. Additionally, programs can provide a steady stream of revenue and can be scheduled around peak days and times to reduce pressure on parking while maximizing utility of the recreation area.

### Mountain Bike Clinics & Camps

Mountain biking is a skills-based sport, and instructional clinics are a great way to introduce more riders to the sport, help established enthusiasts build their skills and drive additional revenue. Clinics can be geared toward riders of all ages and abilities, meaning a broad audience of current and future mountain bikers would benefit from clinics and camps at the Snow Bowl. These programs can be scaled up or down to meet demand and scheduling needs—for example youth camps can take place over multiple weekdays, and adult groups could be hosted for shorter periods during the weekends. Clinics and camps offer sought-after structured learning experiences and social settings and increase community use and familiarity with the full suite of mountain bike offerings at the Snow Bowl.

This plan assumes eight youth camps and six adult camps, starting in the Long-Term phase after the full buildout of the trail network. Youth camps would run for five days a week during July and August and adult camps would be hosted bi-monthly June through August. Combined, the mountain bike camp program presents a sizable boost to net profit for the Snow Bowl.



### MOUNTAIN BIKE CAMP REVENUE POTENTIAL

MTB Camp (kids & adults)	Long-Term	
	Low	High
Visits	110	340
Revenue	\$31,000	\$156,000
Labor	\$13,108	\$13,108
Expenses	\$5,270	\$26,520
Net Profit	\$12,622	\$116,372



### Race Series

Weekly race series are popular traditions for both mountain biking and trail running enthusiasts and will be a welcome addition to the Snow Bowl’s summer programming. The weekly series could include a range of race lengths and courses, providing family friendly experiences and encouraging participation from a range of ability levels. Each week, participants could track their progress, connect with others, and enjoy the scenic trail courses, drawing repeat visitors to the area. These racing opportunities would not only create a consistent draw for outdoor enthusiasts but also build a reputation for the Snow Bowl as a hub for competitive racing and trail running events.

The financial assessment assumes the trail race series will occur once a week over a 10-week period (the Short-Term schedule will be every other week, or five races), with an average participation of 100 racers. Registration fees cover the additional labor costs of hosting the races and allows for a small amount of profit. At its full scale, these race series provide a modest boost to the Snow Bowl’s net profit while providing fun and engaging community recreation events.



#### TRAIL RACE SERIES REVENUE POTENTIAL

Trail Race Series	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	Low	High	Low	High
<b>Visits</b>	300	600	1,660	3,140
<b>Revenue</b>	\$3,000	\$9,000	\$13,000	\$39,000
<b>Labor</b>	\$1,758	\$1,758	\$2,637	\$2,637
<b>Expenses</b>	\$510	\$1,530	\$2,210	\$6,630
<b>Net Profit</b>	\$732	\$5,712	\$8,153	\$29,733

## Winter Night Walks

Winter night walks would offer a unique, immersive experience at the Snow Bowl by combining lights, sound, storytelling, and a guided “walk in the woods.” These DIY-style events would use the existing trails, starting and ending in the Snow Bowl base area but not impacting the existing winter operation. This activity would take advantage of the area’s winter setting, as shorter days allow for an evening experience that is harder to achieve in summer. Additional fall walks or Halloween-themed events would attract a broad audience, providing excellent exposure and marketing opportunities for the area. Highlighting these events as part of a targeted marketing strategy would be crucial to driving attendance, as this is not a “build it, and they will come” scenario but one that relies on ongoing promotion to draw in guests.

This plan assumes that Winter Night Walks will start in the Short-Term and will be offered once a week on a Friday or Saturday night, and every night during winter holidays. Ticket pricing (range from \$7.50 to \$10) will cover the labor costs for two paid employees and operating expenses, while generating a modest boost in net profit and building on the “non-ski” winter activities at the Snow Bowl.



### WINTER NIGHT WALKS REVENUE POTENTIAL

Winter Night Walks	Short-Term	
	Low	High
Visits	1,000	2,000
Revenue	\$7,500	\$20,000
Labor	\$1,758	\$1,758
Expenses	\$1,275	\$3,400
Net Profit	\$4,467	\$14,842



## EVENTS

Events at the Snow Bowl are an exciting and engaging way to welcome the community and visitors to the Snow Bowl in a more structured way. They provide opportunities to showcase the recreational and cultural assets of the Town in addition to generating revenue.

### Summer Events

This financial analysis assumes that the Snow Bowl will host up to six larger events/festivals per summer season, with average attendance between 200 and 500 participants. A mountain bike-oriented or trail running festival will be established first (Short-Term) harnessing the existing community enthusiasm for the sport. Festivals are typically hosted with the help of volunteers; it is assumed that eight paid employees will also work these events.

Festivals at the Snow Bowl provide a modest financial benefit from ticket sales alone, or from a venue rental fee if the event is orchestrated by a third party. Beyond direct revenue, these events enhance the recreation area's reputation and visibility, potentially creating positive spillover effects for other proposed initiatives. From a food and beverage perspective, festivals offer strong revenue potential; however, this income would largely accrue to the concessionaires rather than the recreation area itself. Due to the higher fixed costs of larger events, an effective marketing strategy will be required to attract attendees and maximize the revenue generating potential of these events.

### Live Music

This plan builds on the popular summer music series, assuming biweekly music nights at the Snow Bowl will occur throughout the summer (eight live music nights). Currently, these programs are hosted at the Snow Bowl but operated by other entities. If the Snow Bowl is interested in hosting summer concerts and charging a ticket fee, this may be implemented in the Short-Term with minimal capital investment and would drive additional contribution to net profit. Operating this event would require up to four paid employees.



#### SUMMER EVENTS REVENUE POTENTIAL

Festivals, Mountain Bike/Trail Running Events	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	Low	High	Low	High
<b>Visits</b>	300	600	1,200	2,200
<b>Revenue</b>	\$3,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$44,000
<b>Labor</b>	\$2,344	\$2,344	\$7,032	\$7,032
<b>Expenses</b>	\$510	\$2,040	\$2,040	\$7,480
<b>Net Profit</b>	\$146	\$7,616	\$2,928	\$29,488

#### LIVE MUSIC REVENUE POTENTIAL

Live Music	Short-Term	
	Low	High
<b>Visits</b>	1,200	2,000
<b>Revenue</b>	\$12,000	\$40,000
<b>Labor</b>	\$4,688	\$4,688
<b>Expenses</b>	\$3,060	\$10,200
<b>Net Profit</b>	\$10,252	\$45,112

## Winter Events

While the Snow Bowl is primarily used for skiing and riding in the winter months, the Toboggan Nationals event indicates that the area is a great venue for winter events that celebrate the winter landscape. If the playing surface can be maintained, a Pond Hockey Tournament on Hosmer Pond could be added to the winter schedule, providing an exciting community recreation opportunity where teams could compete against each other for a prize. The development of an additional winter festival that includes unique food and beverage offerings, local art, ice sculptures, and other seasonal activities would provide a fun activity for the community and other Snow Bowl guests.

The financial assessment assumes the development of a pond hockey tournament in the Short-Term, and a winter festival in the Long-Term. Although both events occur only once per year, they represent valuable opportunities to generate additional net profit and strengthen the recreation area's reputation as a community gathering space during the winter months.



### WINTER EVENTS REVENUE POTENTIAL

Pond Hockey Tournament & Winter Festival	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	Low	High	Low	High
Visits	100	300	1,100	3,300
Revenue	\$1,000	\$6,000	\$11,000	\$66,000
Labor	\$1,172	\$1,172	\$2,344	\$2,344
Expenses	\$170	\$1,020	\$1,870	\$11,220
Net Profit	\$830	\$4,980	\$6,786	\$52,436



## DISREGARDED ACTIVITIES

These activities were assessed carefully but do not align with the guiding principles outlined for the Snow Bowl.

### Summer Tubing

Summer tubing was excluded from the plan due to the level of impact it would generate on the land and its conflict with existing trails and circulation routes.

### Dog Park

A fenced dog park was not included due to impacts to existing amenities and the sensitivity of this area of the Hosmer Park watershed and larger Ragged Mountain Recreation Area.

### Disc Golf

A disc golf course was not included due to potential conflicts with other established facilities at the Snow Bowl, including the trails and athletic fields.

### Water Slides

The development of water features, such as water slides or a splash pad was not included due to the energy, water, and space-intensive nature of the facilities. Additionally, these facilities would impact the landscape and are not compatible with winter uses of the site.

### Mountain Coaster

A mountain coaster was not included in the plan due to its impact on the landscape and potential conflict with the existing and future trail system. Additionally, a mountain coaster is a short duration/high throughput/low price point activity with a significant upfront capital cost. To achieve an ROI would require high levels of visitation to the Snow Bowl, which conflicts with the community-oriented use of the facility.

## ORDER-OF-MAGNITUDE CAPITAL COSTS

The potential capital expenditures associated with the plan were developed using pricing from industry vendors and manufacturers and SE Group's industry database. This estimation is based on well-established costs from recently completed projects and verified with facility and amenity manufacturers to ensure accuracy to the degree possible, given that detailed planning and design work has yet to occur. Given this, an additional expense factor for design and permitting costs was included, where applicable, and the model incorporates contingencies to account for potential price escalations between analysis and construction. Given recent volatility in inflation, and the unknown effects of future macroeconomic forces, these estimates are not guaranteed, particularly for projects planned beyond the near term.

Capital expenditures at the Snow Bowl are largely funded by the fundraising efforts of the Ragged Mountain Recreation Area Foundation. The foundation gathered \$5.3 million for the infrastructure projects associated with the 2013-2014 development. The efforts of the Foundation reduce the burden of the Snow Bowl on tax revenue and will help fund future projects.

## CAPITAL COSTS

Category	Phase	Cost/Unit Cost (USD)		Unit Measure	Units	Total Costs		Design & Permitting 20%	Contingency 30%	Total Project Costs	
		Low	High			Low	High			Low	High
<b>Activities</b>											
Lawn Games	Short-Term	\$2,000	\$2,000		1	\$2,000	\$2,000	20%	30%	\$2,000	\$3,000
Seating	Short-Term	\$15,000	\$20,000		1	\$15,000	\$20,000	20%	30%	\$23,000	\$30,000
Pond Hockey (Zamboni Rental)	Short-Term	\$200	\$400	per hour	35	\$7,000	\$14,000	20%	30%	\$11,000	\$21,000
<b>Short-Term Subtotal</b>						<b>\$24,000</b>	<b>\$36,000</b>			<b>\$36,000</b>	<b>\$54,000</b>
Mountain Bike Skills Area	Long-Term	\$60,000	\$120,000	each	1	\$60,000	\$120,000	20%	30%	\$90,000	\$180,000
Winter Night Walk (lights, speakers)	Long-Term	\$10,000	\$20,000		1	\$10,000	\$20,000	20%	30%	\$15,000	\$30,000
Kids play area (general park use)	Long-Term	\$100,000	\$150,000	each	1	\$100,000	\$150,000	20%	30%	\$150,000	\$225,000
Enchanted Forest - Adventure Playground	Long-Term	\$1,000,000	\$1,500,000	each	1	\$1,000,000	\$1,500,000	20%	30%	\$1,500,000	\$2,250,000
<b>Long-Term Subtotal</b>						<b>\$1,170,000</b>	<b>\$1,790,000</b>			<b>\$1,755,000</b>	<b>\$2,685,000</b>
Cable-To-Rail Adventure Ride	Aspirational	\$2,500,000	\$3,500,000	budget	1	\$2,500,000	\$3,500,000	20%	30%	\$3,750,000	\$5,250,000
<b>Aspirational Subtotal</b>						<b>\$2,500,000</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>			<b>\$3,750,000</b>	<b>\$5,250,000</b>
<b>Activities Total</b>						<b>\$3,694,000</b>	<b>\$5,326,000</b>			<b>\$5,541,000</b>	<b>\$7,989,000</b>
<b>Facilities</b>											
New Main Lodge	Short-Term	\$800	\$900	sqft	5976	\$4,781,000	\$5,378,000	20%	30%	\$7,171,000	\$8,068,000
Pavilion Structure	Short-Term	\$100	\$140	sqft	1000	\$100,000	\$140,000	20%	30%	\$150,000	\$210,000
Mid-mountain rest area (picnic table / shade)	Short-Term	\$15,000	\$20,000		1	\$15,000	\$20,000	20%	30%	\$23,000	\$30,000
<b>Short-Term Subtotal</b>						<b>\$4,896,000</b>	<b>\$5,538,000</b>			<b>\$7,344,000</b>	<b>\$8,308,000</b>
Mountain top viewing deck	Long-Term	\$300	\$400	sqft	800	\$240,000	\$320,000	20%	30%	\$360,000	\$480,000
<b>Long-Term Subtotal</b>						<b>\$240,000</b>	<b>\$320,000</b>			<b>\$360,000</b>	<b>\$480,000</b>
Lift upgrade (lift-served MTB / scenic lift rides)	Aspirational	\$5,500,000	\$5,600,000	each	1	\$5,500,000	\$5,600,000	20%	30%	\$8,250,000	\$8,400,000
Mountain top cabin	Aspirational	\$600	\$800	sqft	1000	\$600,000	\$800,000	20%	30%	\$900,000	\$1,200,000
<b>Aspirational Subtotal</b>						<b>\$6,100,000</b>	<b>\$6,400,000</b>			<b>\$9,150,000</b>	<b>\$9,600,000</b>
<b>Facilities Total</b>						<b>\$11,236,000</b>	<b>\$12,258,000</b>			<b>\$16,854,000</b>	<b>\$18,388,000</b>



# Operational Considerations



## **OPERATING SCHEDULE**

While the Snow Bowl is open to the public year-round, staffing levels as well activity and program offerings fluctuate throughout the year. In the winter months, the Snow Bowl is closed Mondays and Tuesdays and open Wednesday through Sunday. In the summer months, staff are on-site Monday through Friday 9 am to 4 pm regardless of the activity and program schedule. As the Snow Bowl adds more programs, activities, and events, staffing levels and the availability of other guest support services will need to adapt accordingly.

Operating schedules can drastically impact the cost-effectiveness of program and service delivery. Identifying optimal windows for operational hours can maximize public use and community benefit while minimizing labor and overhead costs.

The majority of facilities, amenities, programs, and events covered in this plan are presumed to take place between June and September (Memorial Day to Labor Day), with a few select events taking place during leaf-peeping season in October. In the short-term, the Snow Bowl would operate eight hours a day, four days a week, with occasional events taking place outside of this hourly and weekly operating window. This would include a total of 52 days between June and September with the additional five days of operation in October for the scenic lift rides. The Snow Bowl would still be open to the public every day, but programs, events, and activities would not be scheduled during off-days.

In the Long-Term, or when certain facilities are established from the aspirational phase, the operating window could extend to five days a week.

## **VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION: THE SNOW BOWL STEWARDS**

The Snow Bowl benefits from an existing group of dedicated and passionate volunteers. The volunteers currently focus on the maintenance and development of the hike and bike trail network but have also expressed interest in helping out in other ways. The financial models related to the weekly trail racing series and other events are assuming some volunteer labor availability to offset labor costs. Organizing the interest from the community to support their local recreation area and volunteer for various recreation, conservation, and educational initiatives should be a priority as the Snow Bowl ramps up their event schedule. Hosting regular weekly or monthly events for volunteers can also help build community and social connections based around a shared love for the Snow Bowl.



## PRICING

Accessibility is an important component of programs and activities at the Snow Bowl and pricing strategies should reflect this importance. Instead of keeping rates low for all visitors and programs, the Snow Bowl should extend the differential pricing that is used for winter operations (i.e., season pass rates are lower for residents vs. non-residents) to certain events, activities, and programs during the summer months. Differential pricing is a common strategy that keeps activities more affordable for residents while generating additional revenue from visitors. This approach recognizes that locals already support the operation through local taxes, while non-residents do not.

Dynamic pricing (i.e., charging more for peak days or preferred time slots) can be used as a way to manage demand, limit capacity, and encourage advance ticket sales. While dynamic pricing can be harder to manage, encouraging season pass purchases and advance ticket sales can reduce operational volatility and dampen the effect of hard to manage risks such as poor weather.

The Snow Bowl could also consider setting specific cost recovery targets for programs, events, and activities that are aligned with their financial goals around community accessibility.

## EVENT & PROGRAM MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

The financial analysis illustrates the revenue-generating opportunity of events and programs at the Snow Bowl. Planning, marketing, and staffing these events will require dedicated support staff, beyond the staffing capacity that the Snow Bowl currently has. To build this capacity, the Snow Bowl should “test the waters” with select programs and events on a limited schedule. For example, instead of jumping into hosting six larger festivals every summer, start with one or two to work out the extent of the operational and logistical requirements. Smaller and fewer events will limit revenue but will expand awareness of the Snow Bowl as an event venue and grow interest from visitors and seasonal residents. The same is true for programs; while there may be demand for several youth mountain bike clinics, providing a limited initial offering will help gauge interest and allow the team to work out the appropriate staffing and training model needed to support them.

For events such as the race series, there is opportunity to capitalize on the existing volunteer support the Snow Bowl receives for things such as registration, timing, and course flagging.

Initial event offerings should have plans in place to manage and control parking at the Snow Bowl and off-site as needed. For larger events and festivals, the Snow Bowl should provide off-site parking and encourage carpooling or shuttles.

## EFFECTIVE MARKETING & INFORMATION ACCESS

The Plan proposes a few events and programs that without higher levels of participation may not be profitable for the Snow Bowl. As the Snow Bowl increases its program and event offerings, marketing and education initiatives will be important in driving awareness and participation. These initiatives can also be tailored to reach certain audiences based on the type of event and desired participation levels. Future outreach should include a mix of online and printed materials including enhancements to the Snow Bowl website and the creation of a quarterly or biannual recreation program guide available to all residents. For more visitor-facing events and activities, printed materials and social media posts could help reach those audiences in addition to coordinating with the local, regional, and state tourism departments.

## DATA COLLECTION

In both winter and summer operations, developing more accurate and regular information reporting pathways will help the Snow Bowl make data-driven decisions. This includes more consistent reporting and accounting of skier visits, tubing and toboggan visits, and trail visitors. Not only will this data help with internal decision making, but it can also help provide support for grant and funding applications. As more events, programs, and activities are added, identifying data collection protocol for visitor counts, ideally with detail on their origin (resident vs. non-resident), will help the Snow Bowl understand their audience better. If there is ever need for caps on visitation, this data will provide a helpful baseline.

The financial assessment of the Plan's proposed activities, facilities, programs and events assumed labor costs and utilized generalized operational expense allocations to identify the potential level of profitability. As the Snow Bowl moves forward, more detailed accounting is advised to track ongoing financial metrics and key performance indicators. This data may be used to monitor progress and inform decision-making related to the ongoing operation.

Finally, there is opportunity for Camden Parks & Recreation Department to run an annual or biannual community needs survey to collect more qualitative information related to broader recreation experiences.



## CHAIRLIFTS AND SUMMER OPERATIONS

There are several considerations for summer operations of a chairlift. Capacity, or how many people may ride the lift over the course of a day, must be considered, as a lift's capacity is a factor in determining potential business volumes associated with its use. Another consideration is the accelerated "wear and tear" caused by the additional hours of operation, which is of particular concern for older lifts that are critical for winter operations and may be approaching the end of their lifecycle. Additional summer use may accelerate issues and lead to significant maintenance costs. The utilization of the lift is also a factor: operating costs are significant, and it is always the goal to maximize the use (and thus the revenue generation) of a lift when it is operating.

### LIFT CAPACITY

**Uphill Capacity.** The uphill capacity of a chairlift, or the number of people a lift can transport uphill, expressed as people per hour (PPH), is a function of three things: the number of people that can sit on each chair; the rope speed, or the speed at which the "rope" (the cable on which the chairs hang) is moving, expressed in feet per minute; and the spacing of the chairs on the rope.

Fixed-grip chairlifts must be operated at a reduced speed (250 feet per minute) for summer operations to better accommodate pedestrian use.

*For the Summit Triple, this results in a summer uphill capacity of approximately 1,000 people per hour.*

### Downhill Capacity.

The downhill capacity of a chairlift may vary depending on the initial engineering design, from 100% of the uphill capacity to some reduced percentage. It is common for lifts engineered for predominantly winter use to have a reduced downhill capacity, since providing for downhill capacity increases the lift cost and the assumption is that few skiers would be using the lift to go downhill.

From a summer use perspective, downhill capacity is important; while some may choose to hike down, it must be assumed that most people that ride up the lift will also want a ride back down. Because of this, the summer capacity of a chairlift is limited by its downhill capacity.

*The summer downhill capacity of the Summit Triple is currently 50%, or 500 people per hour.*

**Mountain Biking.** A lift's capacity for lift-served mountain biking, like skiing, is not impacted by a reduced downhill capacity. The capacity is impacted by the need to carry both riders and their bikes. There are many solutions for this, including bike hangers that may be attached to the back of the chair, to bike-only carriers that replace chairs at intervals (i.e., every 4th chair is replaced by a bike carrier).

Unlike foot passengers who only ride the lift once during their visit, mountain bikers do so repeatedly over the course of their visit; the uphill lift capacity of the lift must account for this repeat (or "round trip") use.

**Utilization.** Additionally, summer use tends to have a lower utilization than winter use, accounting for the more casual nature of the summer experience. Chairs may have empty spaces if the group size is smaller than the chair size (i.e., a couple riding a triple or quad chair), or if the group needs to split up (i.e., a family of four riding a triple chair) for example.

Given the age of the lift and its lower capacity, this plan does not propose extensive summer use of the existing Summit Triple beyond expansion of the scenic lift ride business.

### Future Lift Capacity

The Aspirational phase of the Plan proposes an upgrade of the summit lift to a fixed-grip quad, with the intention of maximizing the use and revenue generation of the lift for summer operations, as well as improving the winter on-mountain guest experience, while significantly extending the lifespan of this valued asset.

This plan assumes that the design of the proposed fixed-grip quad will accommodate a summer use capacity of at least 1,000 people per hour with 100% download capacity. It is assumed that utilization will be approximately 50% (500 people per hour), which will be distributed between the three proposed uses:

- 50% (250 people per hour maximum) for lift-served mountain biking. The proposed trail network is designed to accommodate approximately 250 people over the course of the day. This lift capacity will accommodate the “roundtrip” use of this audience.
- 25% (125 people per hour maximum) for scenic lift rides.
- 25% (125 people per hour maximum) for the Cable-to-Rail activity.





# Moving Forward



The overall goal of the Multi-Season Recreation Plan is to develop a sustainable, year-round recreation operation at the Snow Bowl that increases the overall community benefit of the recreation area, and balances this community use with revenue generating programs, events, and unique recreation experiences that draw visitors.

The proposed plan is designed to increase overall use of the Snow Bowl by providing amenities, events, and programs that support a range of community recreation pursuits and have the potential to generate revenue. The proposed offerings align with community needs and are of the scale and significance to attract visitors from the regional tourism market. Further, care has been taken to select amenities that embrace the area's unique terrain, scenic views, and lush forests.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The plan embodies the following three Guiding Principles, factors that influence the decision making related to the inclusion of activities, facilities, programs and events in the plan. Grounded by these Principles, this plan reflects a balanced approach between community benefit, tourism opportunity, and long-term financial viability of the Snow Bowl operation.

**Guiding Principle #1  
Enhance Community Benefit**



**Guiding Principle #2  
Capture the Market**



**Guiding Principle #3  
Sustain the Operation**



## ENHANCE COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Camden's Town Plan includes six vision statements that speak to a vibrant well-rounded economy, rich cultural experiences, high-quality educational opportunities, engaged citizens, and maintaining a welcoming environment for both visitors and new residents. This plan contains recommendations that support this long-term vision; developing the proposed facilities will enhance recreation and cultural opportunities for residents and visitors and ensure that Camden continues to be a place where all can "enjoy their lives where the mountains meet the sea."

Enhancing the quality of existing facilities will increase participation and create more opportunities for year-round use of the Snow Bowl. Investments in core infrastructure, such as the lodge and trail system, will extend the operating season, expand opportunities for progression, and enhance accessibility for visitors. By establishing a more well-rounded and sustainable trail network, the Snow Bowl will build on its ability to develop mountain bikers and create positive experiences for trail users. Additionally, investments in gathering places, such as the lodge or an outdoor pavilion will expand opportunities for community events and meet the space use needs for winter operations and summer events.

This plan responds to the stated needs and desires of the community and addresses accessibility deficiencies that currently impede participation.



## CAPTURE THE MARKET

The Snow Bowl, the Town of Camden, and the broader Mid-Coast Maine region all attract visitors from out of the area who come to enjoy the scenic, cultural, and recreational amenities. This planning effort considers those visitors as a key audience for activities and amenities at the Snow Bowl—allowing for increased participation and revenue generation, reducing reliance on residents to offset operating costs. As illustrated through the selected case studies—recreation amenities, adventure play, and unique outdoor experiences can attract paying customers.

While visitors can currently use the existing amenities at the Snow Bowl for no cost, there are ways to generate some revenue with few changes to infrastructure. Programs, facility rentals, and events such as races and concerts are attractive to locals and visitors alike and represent opportunities to increase revenue generation. However, the potential to attract more visitors while enhancing community value will be more fully realized with additional investments into core facilities such as the trail network, base lodge, and lifts. Beyond these core facilities, amenities such as an adventure playground represent an opportunity for the Snow Bowl to provide a high-quality play space for locals while drawing attention from visitors looking for unique, family-friendly, outdoor experiences. Additional capital investments in major attractions will further increase visitor awareness of and interest in the Snow Bowl.

The defining characteristics of the Snow Bowl – the mountain, the forested landscape, the trail network, the views of the ocean, are the most important differentiating factors when it comes to attracting visitors. Amenities and activities that take advantage of these characteristics provide the most unique experiences that cannot be replicated elsewhere in Maine, increasing the attractiveness of the Snow Bowl as a destination.



## SUSTAIN THE OPERATION

Approximately 97% of Snow Bowl revenue is generated during the winter season, supplemented only slightly by Fall Foliage lift rides and venue rental fees. In the last few years, revenue generated by the Snow Bowl has not covered the cost of operation and has not allowed for any savings to be set aside for capital projects or operational reserves.

Looking to the summer months for additional revenue helps address this financial deficit and maintain more approachable ticket prices for winter skiing and riding—an important quality of a public ski area. Many recreation areas will offer use of certain amenities for free, but charge for programs, events, and facility rentals. This is how the Snow Bowl currently operates, as they offer use of the trail network for free, but charge for lodge rentals and lift rides.

Increasing summer revenue generation will only make up small portions of the deficit if considering community use alone—you can only charge so much for programs and events and maintain your local audience. Developing amenities and offering events that attract a balanced and controlled level of use by visitors will help drive higher levels of visitation and revenue. Further, increasing overall participation will help optimize programs and events, as there is capacity beyond community participation. Lastly, increasing opportunities to leverage visitor spending will reduce the burden on local taxpayers to address Snow Bowl funding deficits.

Given the ever-changing nature of community sentiment, recreation participation trends, and broader economic forces, success could take many forms. For that reason, as Town staff work towards implementing the recommendations in this plan, they should continue to return to the three interconnected core objectives: Enhancing Community Benefits, Capturing the Market, and Sustaining the Operation.

Moving forward, this Plan and its Guiding Principles will be a valuable reference tool as the various proposed projects are advanced and will continue to inform decision making.