

2021 ANCHORAGE SKI CLUB

STRATEGIC PLAN



ARCTIC VALLEY



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends –

The Anchorage Ski Club (ASC) is pleased to share its 2021 Strategic Plan. Over the last few years, ASC has been in a negotiation process with the State of Alaska for a concession contract which would define our role as owners/operators of Arctic Valley Ski Area for the next 20 to 60 years. We at the Anchorage Ski Club are not only excited to share our 2021 Strategic Plan, but we are proud to announce the successful execution of the concession contract.

This contract is an agreement that not only facilitates the Anchorage Ski Club's ability to secure funding, something we need to make the major capital improvements necessary to grow and flourish, but it also allows us to provide essential recreational and educational opportunities to the community we serve.

This strategic plan incorporates input from our community collected through planning workshops, focused advisory groups and survey responses from over 400 community members. The plan's reviewing stakeholders are as follows, Anchorage Ski Club Board of Directors, the Chugach State Park Advisory Board, Partners from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

There are many challenges to our operations due to the ongoing COVID pandemic. Nonetheless, we recognize that ASC plays an important role in this crisis in maintaining Arctic Valley as a place to recreate responsibly. For many of us, we have always found refuge in the natural beauty of Arctic Valley and now more than ever we strive to serve our community as a place to recreate and enjoy the splendor of the Chugach. We have developed a comprehensive COVID operations plan and are modifying our facilities to provide visitors with a safe and healthy environment. We are making our facilities available for outdoor education and expanding our youth programs. In addition, we are reaching out to non-profit organizations to facilitate access and increase recreation opportunities for the kids in South Central Alaska.

The year 2020 has also brought to the forefront the realities of diversity, equity and inclusion in the Outdoor global community. You will see in this Strategic Plan our first attempt at putting our internal conversations in front of the community. Our goal at the Anchorage Ski Club is to make Arctic Valley **the premier alpine recreational hub of South-central Alaska**. We understand that achieving this goal takes different levels of motivation, commitment and dedication from many partners. We thank you for your continued support and your commitment to our volunteer-based organization.

Rich Todd
Anchorage Ski Club
Board of Directors, President



WHERE ARE WE

LOCATION



Arctic Valley is conveniently located 11 miles from downtown Anchorage and about 14 miles from Eagle River off of the Glenn Highway. The Arctic Valley Road winds seven miles up above tree line, with picturesque views of the Chugach Mountains, Ship Creek drainage and the Cook Inlet. Arctic Valley ski area boundary encompasses 600 acres with a base elevation of 2,400 feet and a lift rise to almost 4,000 feet above sea level.

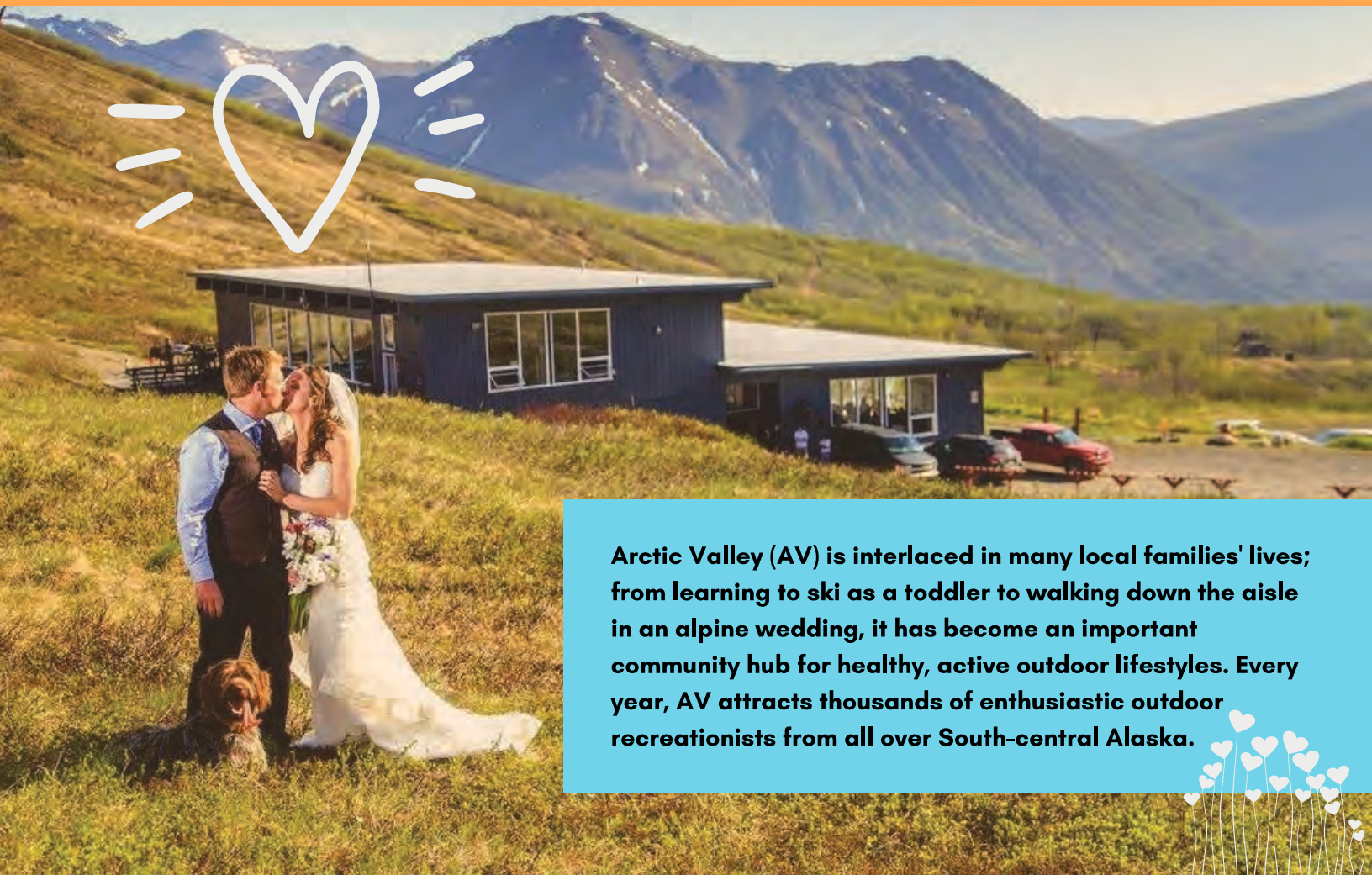
Arctic Valley lies within Dena'ina Elnena (Dena'ina Country) and is home to the K'enaht'ana, the indigenous people of Nuti (Knik Arm), who today are members of the Eklutna (Eydlughet) and Knik (K'enakatnu) tribes. As such, ASC is grateful to and would like to acknowledge the K'enaht'ana community for being historic, present and future stewards of the land, plants and wildlife, and we encourage all visitors to treat Arctic Valley with the same respect. ASC values our relationship with our neighbors and looks forward to future collaborative planning efforts and partnerships.

Map Source: <https://native-land.ca/maps/territories/denaina/>



WHO ARE WE

HISTORY

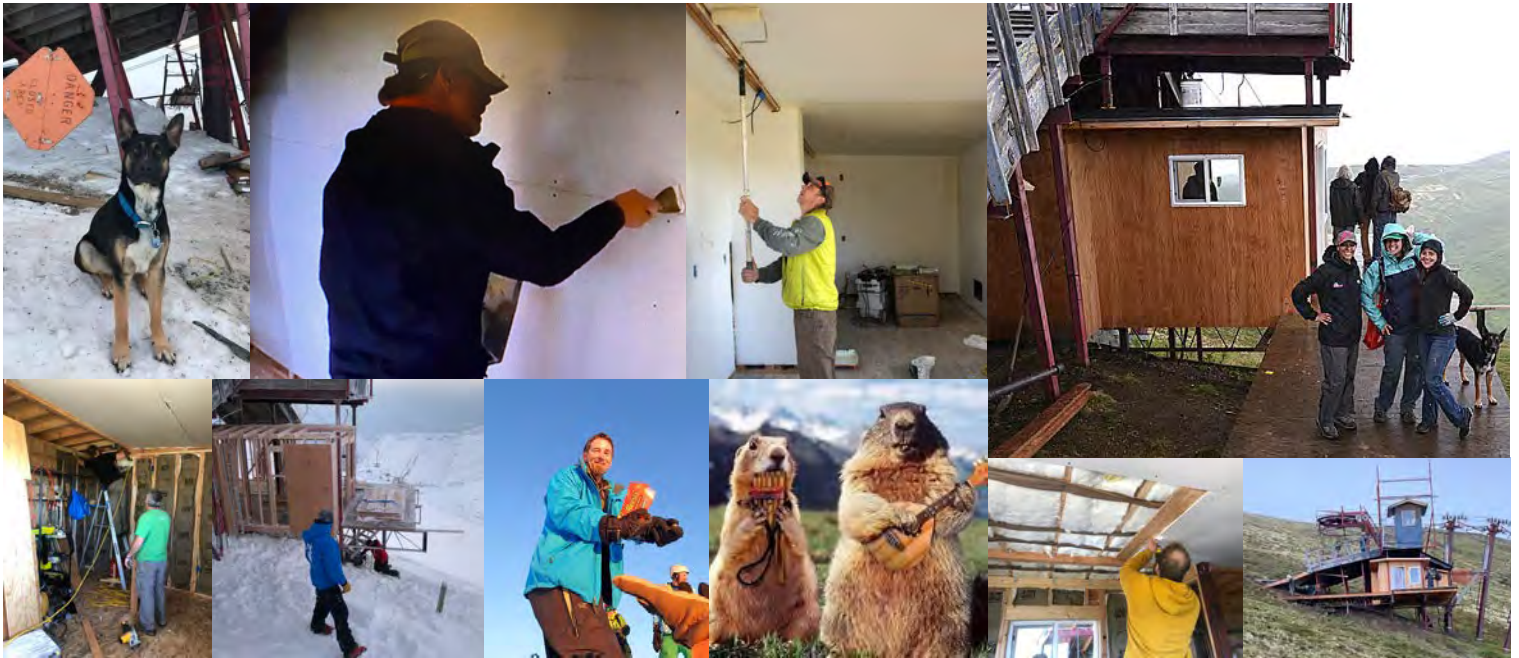


Arctic Valley (AV) is interlaced in many local families' lives; from learning to ski as a toddler to walking down the aisle in an alpine wedding, it has become an important community hub for healthy, active outdoor lifestyles. Every year, AV attracts thousands of enthusiastic outdoor recreationists from all over South-central Alaska.



VOLUNTEERS

ASC volunteers contribute thousands of hours annually assisting in all aspects of Arctic Valley operations. Arctic Valley owes its existence to the many volunteers of our community who have given so freely of their time, energy and resources, and to the ongoing cooperation of the US Army. The original rope-tow and lodge were built and operated by volunteers who also played a large part in the construction of the current lodge, lifts, and associated infrastructure.



During 2020, volunteers came together to design, construct and completely transform the existing Chair 2 patrol shack into a unique public-use backcountry cabin. The cabin sleeps 4 people and is available to rent for summer use. During the winter, the cabin is used by ski patrol. The cabin features an incinerator toilet, 2-burner electric cook top and microwave, adjustable electric heaters, incredible 365 degree views and more!

MEMBERSHIP

Anchorage Ski Club Members are the heart of our organization and help to preserve the resource for future generations. Dues are collected annually and are valid November 1 – October 31.

Regular members receive an Arctic Valley trailhead parking pass, tubing, skiing, and public use cabin discounts, ASC voting rights, and subscription to our email newsletter.

Black Diamond members receive an Arctic Valley skiing and tubing season pass, trailhead parking pass, public use cabin discounts, ASC voting rights, and subscription to our email newsletter.

Life members receive all regular membership benefits, PLUS special discounted lift tickets and deeply discounted season passes.

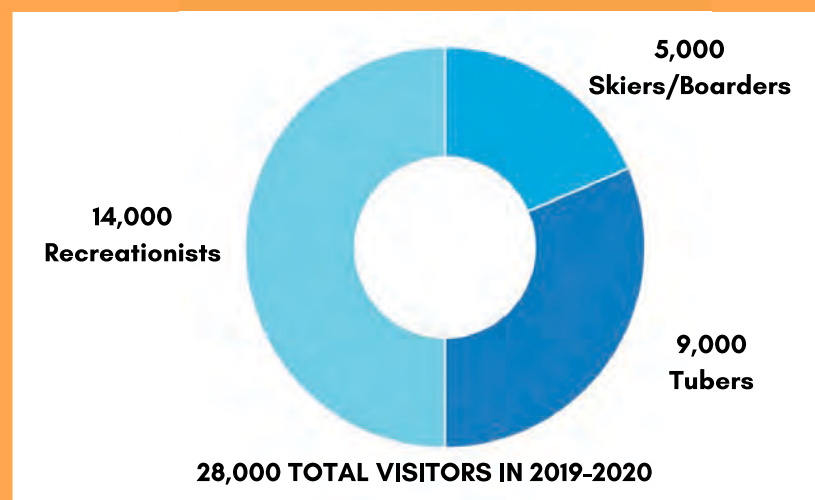


VISITORS

Arctic Valley Ski Area provides access to Chugach State Park for the purpose of outdoor recreation, education, and affordable alpine experiences to the community of South-central Alaska. Conveniently located only 20 minutes from downtown Anchorage, Arctic Valley Ski Area currently offers a variety of alpine recreation including alpine skiing, snowboarding, tubing, hiking, berry picking, outdoor education, a variety of youth alpine ski racing programs, a public-use cabin on top of Chair Two and a summertime venue for weddings, special events and concerts.



During 2019-2020 Arctic Valley Ski Area provided outdoor opportunities that served over 28,000 users.



YOUTH PROGRAMS

Our youth programs increase skills and confidence in a challenging mountain environment. Our Mighty Mites program introduces kids to the fundamentals of alpine skiing. The new Freeride Youth program explores the ungroomed terrain and natural features of Arctic Valley.

The Arctic Valley Ski Team (AVST) has more than 40 athletes from ages 6-17 years of age and several of our athletes have qualified for regional and divisional races.



The Arctic Valley Ski Team has been host to annual Anchorage Youth Ski League Races (YSL) for the past two seasons. The YSL race series attracts more than 200 youth athletes and their families to the hill for a day of fun and competition. We continue to grow AVST with the addition of the Free Ride program in the 2020-21 season.



ORGANIZATION

Founded in 1937, the Anchorage Ski Club has a long history of leadership excellence and experience in the Alaska ski community. Our 15-member Board of directors represents a broad range of experience in the ski industry and includes attorneys, accountants, engineers, entrepreneurs, and other professionals. ASC encourages continued Board development and recruitment to ensure a strong and diverse leadership team. Our Board shares a passion for alpine recreation and a vision for Arctic Valley. The Board is engaged in all aspects of management, operations, planning and works closely with our staff and volunteer leadership to ensure that the organization will effectively fulfill its mission. The ASC will continue to communicate and uphold a culture of trust with all working partners, educational institutions and the community.

As ASC looks to the future, we will continue the following ***Vision, Mission, Purpose and Core Elements.***



*Everyone needs a friend that will call and say,
"Get dressed we are going on an adventure." -
Merry Marmot*



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

VISION

To become the premier alpine recreation location in SOUTH-CENTRAL ALASKA.

MISSION

To provide recreational and educational opportunities at Arctic Valley.

PURPOSE

ASC's Core Purpose is to provide an alpine experience at Arctic Valley through the following actions:

- ❄️ Provide facilities and infrastructure for, and access to, recreational and educational opportunities within the alpine environment of Chugach State Park, specifically at Arctic Valley.
- ❄️ Promote interest, education and participation in outdoor recreation in the state of Alaska with special emphasis on the sports of hiking, skiing and snowboarding.
- ❄️ Benefit the mental and physical condition of the general public and of its members as a result of such interest and participation.
- ❄️ Promote and cooperate with other organizations in furthering community interest in outdoor recreation by offering a platform of education towards the goals of alpine enthusiasts.
- ❄️ Engage in all other associated activities which will aid in accomplishing these purposes without any profits to this organization or the members thereof.

CORE ELEMENTS

EDUCATION
RECREATION
COMMUNITY
PRESERVATION
VOLUNTEERISM

MEMBERSHIP
SUSTAINABILITY
ACCESSIBILITY
INCLUSION

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

While we believed we had been serving our mission to our fullest capacity, observation has shown us that visitors to Arctic Valley do not adequately represent the full diversity of the general population of our community.

We commit to achieving an environment where every person, no matter what their ethnic diversity, age, ability, gender, persuasion or economic background, is welcomed and empowered to be in our outdoor community.



“Once I started skiing again, that changed my life and outlook. Skiing makes me feel whole again.”

— Trevor Kennison



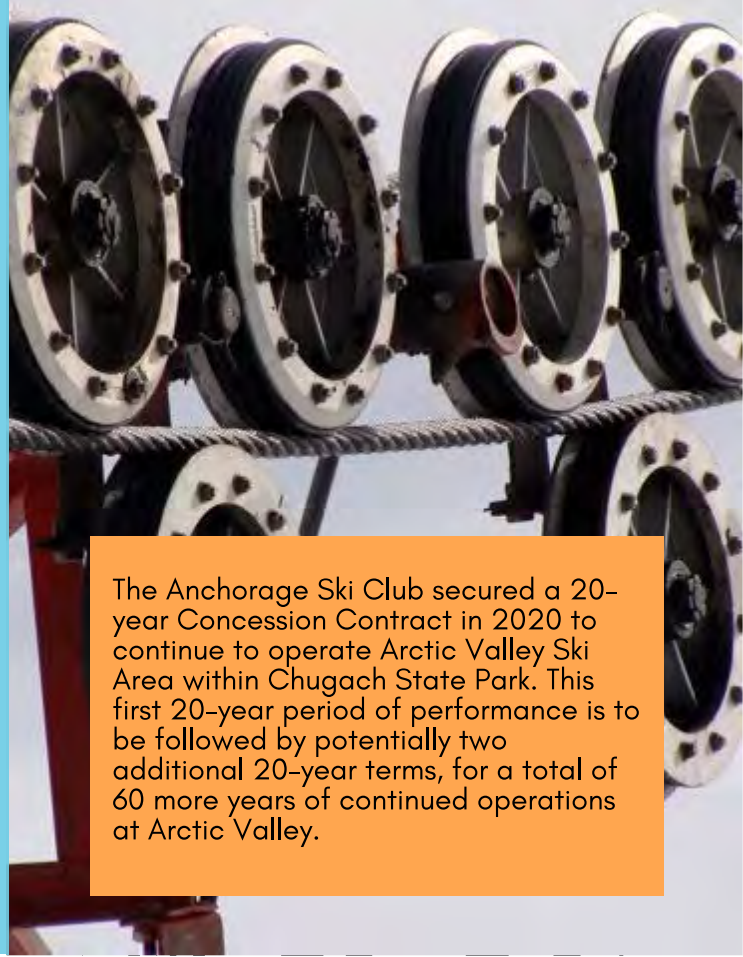
There are many barriers in mountain recreation, and we understand that the work needed to bring equity to Arctic Valley is ongoing. With the full support and encouragement from our Board of Directors, we will continue our work with our leadership teams, employees, and volunteers.

We would like to make it clear that there is no room for racism, hatred or bigotry of any kind at Arctic Valley or within the Anchorage Ski Club. ASC stands against these injustices and commits to building an equitable outdoor community where our ski area and programs support and promote equitable participation, safety and access for all in the outdoors.

STRATEGIC PLAN INTENT

Strategic planning assesses existing conditions and formulates recommendations that will provide direction and focus to achieve the desired future infrastructure upgrades, plans to grow use of the area, and proposed new programs and services. The intent of this strategic plan is to guide the Anchorage Ski Club for the short-term 1-3 years, with the understanding that aspects of a Master Plan (Goal #1) may supersede this plan.

The internal process for developing the strategic plan is highlighted in following pages, with the intent that the plan will be reviewed by the Chugach State Park (CSP) Advisory Board and the public prior to adoption. Final plan adoption requires approval of the CSP Project Director. The plan will be updated at least every three years, per the Concessions Agreement.



The Anchorage Ski Club secured a 20-year Concession Contract in 2020 to continue to operate Arctic Valley Ski Area within Chugach State Park. This first 20-year period of performance is to be followed by potentially two additional 20-year terms, for a total of 60 more years of continued operations at Arctic Valley.



STRATEGIC PLAN PLANNING PROCESS

- Starting in June 2020, an advisory group of the ASC Board of Directors was formed and met virtually to develop the recommended goals and actions as outlined in this plan. See Appendix A: *Planning Advisory Group for Strategic Planning*.
- A public survey was initiated and sent to all ASC members. A second version of the survey was refined and shared publicly via Arctic Valley's social media channels. To date, over 400 responses have been collected as the survey remains live. The purpose of the survey was to collect community feedback regarding priorities for development and to discover areas in need of improvement. Results of the survey are available upon request.
- On September 19, 2020, an all-day professional planning workshop was held with Advisory Group members that included a site tour of existing facilities and multiple visioning exercises. This process ultimately laid the foundation for the Strategic Plan, as well as the first steps toward the development of the Master Plan. This workshop was facilitated by Maeve Nevins-Lavtar, ASLA, Professional Planner and Alanna Blough, Architectural Designer, who have over three decades of combined experience with land-use and recreation planning, and architectural design.
- Winter 2021: Draft strategic plan completed, pending final approval by Chugach State Parks.



STRATEGIC PLAN PLANNING TOOLS

During the fall 2020 Strategic Planning workshop, attendees participated in several visioning exercises, reviewed survey results from over 400 members of the public, and went on a guided site tour of AV. Information collected will be used for both short and long-range planning efforts.



Vision Boards



Workshop Exercise:
"What is special about Arctic Valley?"

Q5 What is your favorite memory of AV?

Rendezvous Merry Marmot Festivals Fresh powder Mount Gordon Lyon married years ago fun
Trail running early every lifts family touring tail chair crowds first time incredible spring
Skinning winter morning Tubing closed backcountry skiing Love
pow days Alpenglow pow years kid road first Seeing Hiking Riding
friends snow Powder days nice skiing late
day beautiful powder son runs season Snowboarding
Growing good favorite back first tracks time sunny summer blueberries
Learning ski deep Going always Also one Blueberry picking many sledding
t-bar Merry Marmot Rendezvous Peak top Beautiful hikes took Hiking summer people
Mt Gordon Lyon berry picking Night skiing

Online Survey

GOALS & ACTIONS





GOAL 1

DEVELOP A MASTER PLAN (10 year)



VISION

Maintain the authentic character of Arctic Valley with balanced growth of operation, by creating a long-range **Master Plan** document that will be used as a tool to guide the future development and priorities of the Anchorage Ski Club and Arctic Valley for the next 10 years.

ACTION STEPS

- Investigate and pursue funding sources to hire professional ski resort design/planning specialists.
- Compile existing documents and resources.
- Identify internal and external resources and develop preliminary plan content.
- Identify and research existing comparable plans and design concepts.
- Acknowledge that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) values and priorities will be integrated in the master plan.
- Establish and Initiate planning process, timeline and deliverables with goal of adoption by 2024.
- Solicit public input through an initial survey and other outreach efforts.

*The **master planning** process takes a comprehensive look at existing conditions, programs, operations, opportunities and constraints. Public and stakeholder input, surveys, planning initiatives, existing development, physical characteristics, and social and economic conditions all inform the final plan. The Master Plan would propose phased implementation of significant upgrades and enhancements for Arctic Valley.*



GOAL 2

ENHANCE EXPERIENCE OF MEMBERS & VISITORS

VISION

Balance the increasing quantity of visitors with the quality of visitor experience.

Balance the needs and expectations of new visitors, while continuing to provide for existing Arctic Valley users. This increased use equates to an increased need for maintenance and improvements; affecting, but not limited to, road access and maintenance, parking lot capacity and many first-time visitors to the area being unfamiliar with travelling in alpine conditions.



ACTION STEPS

- Increase and improve way-finding and informational signage incorporating indigenous place names, language(s), cultural elements and graphics on new signage as appropriate.
- Assess and enhance current food and beverage offerings.
- Optimize tube park operations to meet increased demand.
- Investigate and improve parking and pedestrian circulation.
- Reinforce existing and nurture new relationships with guests, members, volunteers and staff.
- Invite those from non-traditional outdoor recreation backgrounds to Arctic Valley through outreach, education and recruitment for membership and roles as employees, volunteers and board members.
- Provide appropriate accommodation for visitors with different abilities and needs.
- Evaluate and address other new service demands as they arise.
- Keep access affordable for people of all income levels.
- Develop marketing and outreach to disadvantaged youth with scholarships for outdoor educational opportunities.
- Maintain Arctic Valley's family-friendly atmosphere.



GOAL 3

INFRASTRUCTURE

VISION

Continue to maintain existing assets, while expanding and enhancing infrastructure in an efficient manner that is consistent with Arctic Valley's vernacular, serves the community's needs, and enables ASC to provide services and facilities that fulfill the vision, mission and purpose of ASC for years to come.



ACTION STEPS

- Continue to allocate resources to accommodate infrastructure needs to meet all applicable requirements of Municipality of Anchorage, State of Alaska and Federal accessibility standards.
- Explore opportunities to provide priority infrastructure on neighboring lands (Chugach State Park, JBER).
- Develop a capital improvements plan. Evaluate and assess feasible T-bar lift replacement options.
- Continue regular maintenance and planned upgrades to facilities and infrastructure.
- Initiate planning for major lodge renovations.
- Undertake trail restoration and improvements on existing trails, as resources for such projects become available.
- Define and determine future trail projects through planning efforts during the master plan development; including exploring the relocation of trailhead services and other related amenities to better serve summer users.
- Explore and analyze additional public-use cabin expansion including site selection and design development recommendations to be incorporated in the Master Plan.



GOAL 4

IMPROVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES AT ARCTIC VALLEY

VISION

Increase community involvement and foster the next generation of land stewards by becoming one of the premier alpine recreation destinations in South-central Alaska.



ACTION STEPS

- Develop a year-round outdoor recreation activity guide with scheduled programs, events and educational opportunities, for all ages, to be shared with South-central Alaskan community.
- Develop a mentorship program that seeks to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the outdoors and alpine sports.
- Develop events and experiences that create understanding of ASC's mission and priorities.
- Engage non-profit outdoor education experts and organizations to partner on additional educational programs.
- Investigate expanding year-round recreation to include mountain biking, uphill winter ski touring access and other recreation opportunities.
- Explore and develop new events, programs, activities, and amenities for four-season recreation, incorporating ways of reducing barriers to entry and ensuring opportunities are marketed to local neighborhoods with high diversity.



GOAL 5

BUILD THE FINANCIAL, STRUCTURAL, AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES TO FULFILL GOALS 1 THROUGH 4

VISION

Develop a sustainable financial foundation with diversified resources and collaborative partnerships.



ACTION STEPS

- Forecast funding needs for the next three years and establish financial fundraising objectives to fulfill goals 1-4.
- Develop and implement a funding strategy which increases revenue streams by diversifying and expanding user groups.
- Develop a marketing plan and dedicate appropriate funds for implementation.
- Explore opportunities to increase revenue and expand brand awareness to a broader, more diverse market with increased advertising, marketing and outreach.
- Identify and collaborate with local non-profits, governments, and other agencies to obtain resources for achieving our goals.
- Develop physical and structural resources to support goals as identified in the future Master Plan.
- Evaluate reconfiguring the Executive Board and other actions to emphasize the development of donor relationships and further integrate donors, members, and users into our mission.
- Evaluate our capital structure to consider debt financing, while maintaining control of expenses, including payroll/staffing.

The Anchorage Ski Club generates revenue from memberships, special events, major gifts, corporate partners, annual giving, foundations, other grant sources, ski and tubing operations, food and beverage, cabin rentals, summer wedding events, and an annual auction. ASC does not receive any regular state, local, or federal appropriations.

APPENDIX



APPENDIX INDEX

Appendix A: Planning Advisory Group for Strategic Planning

Appendix B: 2021 Anchorage Ski Club Board of Directors

Appendix C: Arctic Valley Maps

Appendix D: Capital Improvements Past and Projected

Appendix E: DNR Concessions Contract

APPENDIX A

STRATEGIC PLAN ADVISORS

- **Maeve Nevins-Lavtar**, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, Strategic Planning Committee Chair, Lead Workshop Facilitator, Professional Planner/Designer
- **Alanna Blough**, Anchorage Ski Club Member, Architectural Designer, Strategic Planning Committee Facilitator
- **John Robinson-Wilson**, Arctic Valley Ski Area General Manager
- **Rich Todd**, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, President
- **Beverly Luedke-Chan**, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- **Adam Smith**, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- **Matthew Cullens**, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- **Bryan Kirkpatrick**, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, Secretary
- **Kevin Keeler**, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- **Daniel Jensen**, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, Treasurer
- **Mark Heysell**, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- **John Koltun**, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, VP Membership
- **Marissa Riopelle**, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- **Matt Mead** – Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, Correspondence Secretary
- **Luke Clement** – Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, VP Operations
- **Kyle Culver**– Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- **Nick Bajwa** – Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- **Erik Penfold** – Anchorage Ski Club Member; AV Staff
- **Eric Pederson** – Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors (retired 2020)
- **Lee Fisher** – Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors (retired 2020)

THANK YOU
STRATEGIC PLAN
VOLUNTEERS!



APPENDIX B

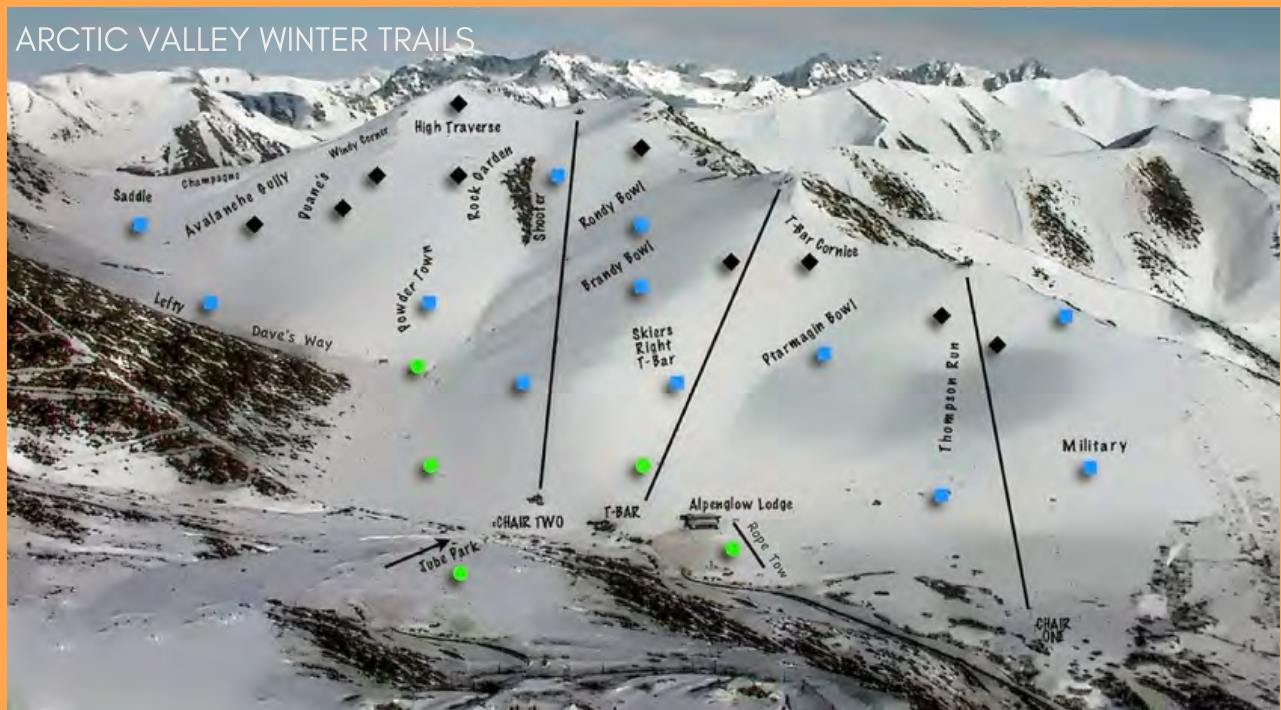
2021 ANCHORAGE SKI CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Rich Todd, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, President
- John Koltun, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, (Past President)
- Daniel Jensen, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, Treasurer
- Kevin Keeler, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, VP Operations
- Bryan Kirkpatrick, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, Secretary
- Matt Mead, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors,
Correspondence Secretary
- Maeve Nevins-Lavtar, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- Beverly Luedke-Chan, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- Adam Smith, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- Matthew Cullens, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- Mark Heysell, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors,
(Past President)
- Marissa Riopelle, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors, VP
Membership
- Luke Clement, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- Kyle Culver, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors
- Nick Bajwa, Anchorage Ski Club, Board of Directors



APPENDIX C

ARCTIC VALLEY MAPS



APPENDIX D

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PAST AND PROJECTED

Anchorage Ski Club Capital Projects 2016-2021

2016 - Purchased winch groomer

2016 - Purchased snow gun

2016 - Motor and electrical upgrades on T-bar

2017 - Chair 2 Haul Rope replacement

2019 - Refurbished and reopened pony tow

2019 - Purchased new snowmachine

2019 - Purchased second snow gun

2019 - Groomer rebuild (UAA Diesel Technology partnership)

2020 - Outdoor fire pits

2020 - Public Use Cabin at the top of Chair 2

2021 - Public Use Cabin in parking lots

2021 - New winch groomer

2021 - Food kiosk at summer trailhead

APPENDIX E

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) CONCESSIONS CONTRACT (Separate Document)