

Silver Star Mountain Resort

Ski Area Master Plan

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INTRODUCTION

Objectives

The Ski Area Master Plan for Silver Star Mountain was approved in 1979, and updated extensively in 1988 to include the Putnam Creek area. Most of the development anticipated in that plan has taken place, and the plan has been substantially realized. It is necessary therefore to construct a new master plan to take the resort into the next ten years.

The objectives of this document are:

- ◇ Provide a rational and a framework for future development of winter recreation activities at the resort
- ◇ Provide authorities with jurisdiction information on the future development of the resort.

Analysis of the residential and commercial accommodation mixed use area surrounding the village and ski area base facilities are not included in this plan. It will be the subject of the Village Master Plan, to be completed in 1994. That plan will be integrated with the North Okanagan Regional District Official Community Plan, scheduled for revision in 1994, and completion in 1995.

History

Skiers first began skiing the open slopes on the south face of what was then known as Aberdeen Mountain in the late 1920s. Continued local interest led to the construction of the Silver Star Scenic Highway in 1939. This route to the summit of the mountain was used, as far as it was plowed, for winter access to the abundant snow at the summit. In 1942, Silver Star Provincial Park was created as a Class A Provincial Park. The status of the Park was changed in 1958 to Provincial Recreation Area, to allow the development of winter recreation activities

The first rope tows were installed in the mid 1950's as skiing became more popular. A group of local businessmen formed a company to develop skiing at the mountain, and in 1959 opened a Poma lift from the 5400 foot level to the summit. Over the next few years, skiing activity increased and two Tee bars were built to replace the original rope tows. In 1969, the Yellow Chair, then one of the largest lifts in western Canada, was built, and the ski terrain east of the Poma lift developed. Also in 1969 the Summit Chair replaced the Poma, and it was relocated. With the addition of the Aberdeen Chair in 1977, the ski terrain and lift system was essentially complete.

After the reclassification of the park in 1958, a day lodge and parking lots were constructed in what is now the upper area of the village. A small cabin colony developed on land leased from Parks, between the two parking lots. Originally built for commercial accommodation, these cabins were eventually sold to private owners. In part due to land ownership and park restrictions, this remained the only development in the base area until 1984. In 1985, when the

last outstanding mining claim lapsed, the Park was reclassified as a Class A park, in order to protect the area from future mining claims.

During the early 1970s, Silver Star Mountain was one of the three largest and most popular ski destinations in western Canada, along with Sunshine Village in Banff, and the developing resort at Whistler. The ski area development explosion of the 1970s and early 1980s, fueled by condominium development, created resorts like Big White, Panorama and Whistler, and bypassed Silver Star Mountain. Market share began to shrink, and the company's shareholders engaged Ecosign to create a new master plan for development of a village on the mountain, which was approved in 1980.

A key outcome of that Master Plan was the creation of development land within the Provincial Park, in order to foster on mountain accommodation, and establish a village. In 1981, new shareholders began to develop the base area and infrastructure in accordance with the Master Plan.

In 1984, the first new commercial accommodation on the mountain, Putnam Station, was built. This was followed in 1985 by the relocation of the base facilities to the current village centre, and in 1986 by more hotel construction. In 1989, the first home in the Knoll was built, and substantial residential construction has followed.

In conjunction with the development of base facilities, nordic trails were improved at the resort, starting in 1985 with a loop lit for night cross country skiing. Over the next several years, more trails were added to create an alternate winter activity.

The ski area development envisioned in the 1979 Master Plan was extensively reviewed, and in 1988 a revision was approved which included Putnam Creek. In 1990, construction of the first of three lifts in that plan, the Silver Queen Quad was completed, and terminals started for the two express quads. Their completion in 1991 represented the first major expansion of the downhill ski terrain at Silver Star Mountain since 1967.

A change in Provincial Park policy led to a review of the Park boundary, and a recommendation in 1991 to exclude the commercial ski area from the Park, and transfer that land to the Ministry of Crown Lands. Since the Putnam Creek area was developed under Park Permit, this has led to a need to establish tenure over that development.

The improvements at Silver Star Mountain Resort have led to it regaining market share in western Canada, and starting to create a destination market. In order to maintain this momentum, further improvement will be needed.

EXISTING FACILITIES

Alpine Ski Area

The existing alpine ski resort consists of two distinct areas, as well as the beginner and circulation lifts around the village. The Vance Creek area has 40 alpine runs, mostly intermediate, with a few advanced runs in the western half. This side of the mountain, with its southern exposure and popular intermediate runs, attracts the larger proportion of the skiers. Putnam Creek's northern exposure maintains deep, soft snow on the steeper and more difficult ski terrain, and is popular with advanced skiers. The Village has two areas of novice and beginner terrain.

The Vance Creek area is developed to near its ideal capacity. The ski runs are serviced by an express quad lift and two fixed grip double chairs. These lifts are in balance with the terrain.

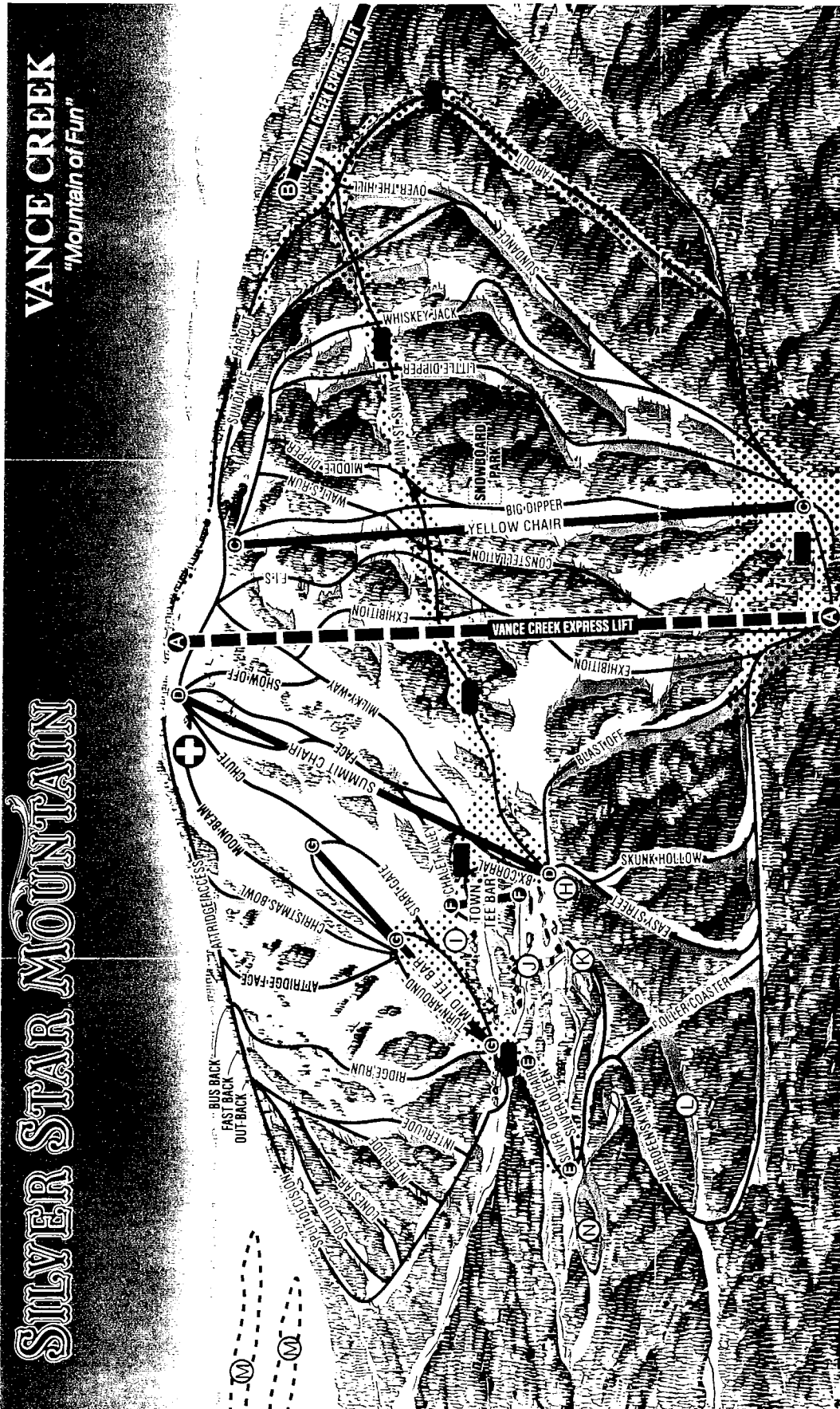
Putnam Creek is serviced by a quad detachable chair operating at 60% of its design capacity. To date, 24 ski runs have been built. There is lift serviced terrain suitable for developing another 15 to 20 ski runs, mostly upper intermediate and advanced. With the full development of the terrain, and full capacity of the lift, this area will be balanced.

The village area is serviced by two tee bar lifts, and a fixed grip quad chairlift. Much of the terrain around the village has been developed as novice and beginner runs. Lift services in this area will be improved with a planned upgrade of the Town Tee to a chairlift.

The existing alpine ski resort has a comfortable capacity of 5000 skiers at one time, assuming lift lines of 10 to 15 minutes.

Maps

- ◇ Vance Creek Mountain Guide
- ◇ Putnam Creek Mountain Guide
- ◇ Silver Star Mountain Topographic "as built"



VANCE CREEK
"Mountain of Fun"

SILVER STAR MOUNTAIN

PUTNAM CREEK
"Valley of Adventure"



