



Mount Spokane Master Plan

Alternatives Stage Public Input Summary | August 2025

Introduction

This report summarizes the community engagement efforts and feedback collected through two surveys about the Alternatives stage of the Mount Spokane Master Plan. These results will help guide Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission's ("Washington State Parks") development of a "preferred alternative," which will be presented to the community this fall (2025). Once feedback is received about a preferred alternative, Washington State Parks will develop a draft master plan.

Engagement Summary

To solicit input Washington State Parks reached out directly to local Tribes to share the Alternatives Report and request feedback. The link was also sent to the project distribution list including community members, stakeholders, and other interested parties. The Report was posted online with an online survey link to solicit feedback on May 28, 2025, with a closing date for the survey of July 14, 2025. State Parks also hosted a public open house meeting at the Argonne Library on June 24, 2025, attended by 108 people, to collect input on two alternative scenarios ("Community Mountain" and "Recreation Destination, collectively "alternatives") posed for the park, which are summarized in the Alternatives Report [Future Planning for Mount Spokane | Washington State Parks](#).

The email and associated survey received 284 submittals while the open house resulted in approximately 30-40 surveys per station (e.g. Trails, Built Environment, etc.). It is likely that many of those who attended the open house completed the distribution list online survey instead of the open house station surveys as there was a large influx of completed surveys following the open house.

A follow-up online survey was sent to the project distribution list on August 12 to ask specifically about future scenarios for Bear Creek Lodge. This survey closed on August 19 and netted 248 responses, including 84 written comments.

In addition to the above, Washington State Parks received written comments from the Mt. Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, Washington Natural Heritage Program, and Asians for Collective Liberation.

Results

The alternatives included over 80 project actions and were presented as an “a-la-carte” menu of projects. In general, participants were asked to identify their “top” and “bottom” projects in addition to more open-ended questions regarding each alternative.

Overarching themes:

- A majority of respondents like and want to preserve the existing character of the park and the mountain.
- Support for Mt. Spokane Ski & Snowboard Park investments that can be generally characterized as sustaining the existing facility vs. expansion.
- In keeping with the existing character, the following features were also ranked highly among respondents:
 - o Continue a lighter summer/heavier winter use and management model – in general, respondents like the park “the way it is.”
 - o General concern regarding [over]commercialization of the park, including the downhill ski and snowboard park.
 - o The ski area is a great asset; its rustic nature fits the character of the mountain/park; doesn’t need to be super fancy.
 - o Desired trail improvements generally characterized as improving overall functionality of the trail system and retaining current multi-use character.
- Other features with relatively high ranking that support improving and retaining the existing character of the park:
 - o Modernize Selkirk Lodge.
 - o Improve signage - Add clear and visible signage from the road at trailheads and other park features.
 - o Update and upgrade information kiosks to include more trail experience and location information.
 - o Historic renovation of the Bald Knob shelter and selective thinning of trees to restore the historic viewpoint.
- Bear Creek Lodge opinion is split and nuanced – while demolishing the lodge was the least favorite project as reported by the combined score (see below), respondents were evenly split on whether to renovate it or not (this project action received an equal number of votes as a “Bottom” project as it received as a “Top” project). The separate Bear Creek Lodge survey also included a split result with roughly 50% favoring renovation while 50% favored a combination of demolish or demolish and build new. This will be expanded upon below.
- Alternative B (“Recreation Destination”) was slightly more favored over Alternative A (“Community Mountain”).

Sample of Written Comments

In support of Alternative A:

- “It maintains the mountain in a state that enables access but keeps it in less developed state.”
- “It aligns more closely with how I use the park: heavy winter, lighter summer use. It preserves the park in a less developed--more primitive state.”
- “Maintaining the park as a community resource. Not a lot of expansion. Enhancing some existing facilities without expanding them. Keeping the Vista House historical — no modernization. Same with the Selkirk Lodge.”
- “I like the expanded parking and water storage. Trail Projects-trail improvement within existing trail system.”
- “I believe that Alt A is more consistent with my idea of the best use of the mountain. It's a local resource, and while use could be increased some without detrimental impacts, attempting to make it a destination might degrade the overall experience. Further, Spokane is a large enough community that the economic benefits of a "Recreation Destination" will be proportionally small. I'm in favor of maximizing the mountain for use by those that live in the region.”

In support of Alternative B:

- “The fact that it looks to the future.”
- “I like the more expansive approach, maintaining meadow integrity, but adding more options for summer recreation.”
- “This grander vision expands the attractiveness of eastern Washington and develops appropriate activities to bring Washingtonians from the other side of the Cascades”
- “Investment in Mt Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park to make it more of a year-round recreating option - while climate change is a concern for long-term winter sports, the 2050 estimate of few snow days still presumes >100 days of on-snow opportunities, and skiing/snowboarding will still be a great revenue generator, so investment is critical to maintain facilities and boost engagement...”
- “Only thing good about plan b is Keeping bear creek lodge and renaming linders lodge. that family has contributed heavily to mt. Spokane (linders ridge).”

Results – By the Numbers

Each survey respondent received a fixed number of selections to allow them to “vote” on projects they loved (“Love it!” or “Top 5”) and projects they didn’t love (“Chuck it” or “Bottom 5”). Each vote was assigned a weighting. “Love it” votes received a 3-point weighting while “Chuck it” votes received a -3-point weighting. In addition, open house survey respondents could assign additional votes to projects they “Liked,” which were assigned a 1-point weighting.

Interpreting the “Combined Score”

A high score should be interpreted as a project that was selected frequently as a “Love it” or “Top 5” project. Projects with a more neutral score imply either a) many votes equally in favor of and against the project, which would effectively cancel each other out; or b) low number of votes due to project either being perceived as neutral or not of high interest. Projects with a high negative combined score typically received a large number of “Chuck it” or “Bottom 5” project votes.

Top 20 Projects by Combined Score

Proposed Action	Combined Score
New bi-directional only mountain bike trail from Entrance Trailhead to Lower Selkirk Trailhead	84
Round-the-mountain trail that replaces or becomes the new Trail 130	83
New hiker-only trail from Bald Knob to summit (alternative to Trail 140)	81
Modernize Selkirk Lodge	73
Develop a forest management plan for the southwest portion of park	70
Develop new multi-use trail on the northside of park road between Bear Creek Lodge and Entrance Trailhead the connects the lodge, Trail 140, Trail 110, and Entrance Trailhead.	69
Expand the long-term boundary to include the Nordic ski area	66
Expand Recreation land classification around Bear Creek Lodge	60
New multi-use trail around Linder Ridge (Lower Selkirk TH to Quartz Peak/Horse Mountain)	48
Designate a conservation buffer around Mount Spokane State Park	46
On-mountain Water Storage (MS2000)	44
Develop backpacking camping sites on Linder Ridge near Eagle Crest Trail	41
Update and upgrade kiosks to include more information about trail experiences and potentially customize zoom extent to include areas together (e.g. Bald Knob and CCC Heritage Area) as one “unit”	40
Selectively thin trees at Bald Knob Day Use Area to re-establish historic viewpoint from the picnic shelter.	36
Change land classification from Resource Recreation to Natural Area to match inventoried meadow on Horse Mountain	35
Expand long-term boundary to include entirety of Bear Creek Lodge acquired in 2023	35
Limited Summer Lift Capacity - Replace Vista Cruiser Chairlift with modern chairlift that allows for summer operation*, replace Parkway Express**, replace Hidden Treasure, and Beginner’s Luck lifts. (MS2000)	34
Develop downhill, lift served mountain biking / hiking trails within the Concession Area served by Parkway Express Lift	33
Develop Day Road Trailhead	30
Add clear signage at each trailhead identifying the trailhead name and design to be seen clearly from the road.	26

Bottom 20 Projects by Combined Score

Proposed Action	Combined Score
Demolish Bear Creek Lodge	-77
Change use of Trail 100 from multi-use to hiker-only	-54
Ropes Course (MS2000)	-37
Rename Bear Creek Lodge Linder Lodge	-35
Facilitate hang gliding use	-34
Surplus 40-acre Elk parcel	-33
Redesignate Trail 130 east of Bald Knob to KC Loop from “Trail 130” to “fire road”	-31
Phase out winter-dependent activities in climate-impacted areas	-29
Expand Skijoring	-29
Develop unique park branding	-26
Modernize the Vista House	-25
Retain and enhance tubing hill at Bear Creek Lodge	-24
Thematically and visually connect Bald Knob and CCC Heritage areas	-21
Revise “exchange only” properties; include in long-term boundary without conditions; remove “surplus”	-21
Expand Bald Knob Day Use Area parking	-18
Expand long-term boundary to include Larch Mountain ridge line NE of summit	-14
Designate long-term boundary 7 properties as Natural Forest in Alternative A and Resource Recreation in Alternative B	-10
Develop new park gateway feature	-9
New Vehicle Maintenance Building & Cat Storage (MS2000)	-8
Upgrade utilities and services to Bear Creek Lodge, including, but not limited to water, sewer, and electrical	-8

Bear Creek Lodge Alternatives Survey Results

As described previously, Washington State Parks distributed a separate online survey dedicated to soliciting input on the future of Bear Creek Lodge. This was in response to the initial Alternatives Report survey results, which implied strong opposition to demolishing the lodge while renovating the lodge garnered a large and equal number of “Love it” and “Chuck it” votes. The survey respondents for this follow-up survey were asked to choose one of three options:

- Option 1 - Demolish the lodge and restore the former footprint to a more passive use.
- Option 2 - Demolish the lodge and replace it with a new visitor center.

- Option 3 - Renovate the lodge.

Each option included a cost estimate for initial construction, long-term operations and maintenance (“O&M”) cost range (Low to Very High), and estimated time to complete.

53% of respondents favored renovation while 47% favored some form of demolition. A significant majority appear to favor some structure / interior space in that location with some services provided. A sample of the 84 written comments is provided below:

- “IMHO, it makes no sense to open the can of worms that a renovation of the current structure would entail. I do like the idea of having restrooms, a gift shop, visitors' center, and modern offices for our amazing rangers.”
- “Please do the right thing and renovate. Even though it’s not eligible for historic register, you can treat it like it is. Don’t lose any more history in this park.”
- “Multiple efforts to monetize the lodge over the past 30 years have been unsuccessful. I don't think a Visitor's Center would be utilized enough to justify expense. I vote for Passive Space, trailhead, and kiosk.”
- “Option 2 or 3... we need something!”
- “Not having lodging near the State Park, particularly during the winter season, is a serious disadvantage. While the costs are high, I believe Option 3 is imperative.”
- “I had actually considered buying Bear Creek lodge (then Kirks Lodge) in 1983 along with LouLou Kneubeler. After a lot of research, we decided that it was too expensive even back then to renovate and upgrade it to a quality standard. Even after renovation the upkeep will be higher than a new building.”
- “Option 2 is by far the best use of taxpayer dollars and what people will use. It's so practical and will be a VERY nice amenity to a super-sized park with many underwhelming amenities.”
- “Would the Davenport Hotel Collection be willing to lease? Keep Spokane's History alive and relevant. Granted, this could mean more tourism on the mountain.”

So, What Now?

The input received at this stage will inform the development of a preferred alternative. As described in the Alternatives Report, the purpose of this stage in the planning process is to consider alternate scenarios and to arrange various projects and features (identified at earlier stages in the process) with each of the scenarios. Additionally, some projects and features are dependent on other things being included in a preferred alternative. For example, if the preferred alternative includes a conservation buffer (an Alternative A project), it may not be necessary to include many of the long-term boundary projects that were identified in Alternative B.

Washington State Parks expects to share a preferred alternative with the public this fall. Information will be posted at [Future Planning for Mount Spokane | Washington State Parks](#) and sent to the project distribution list.