

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Mt Van Hoevenberg 2025 Amendment to the 1986 Unit Management Plan



NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY.

**Olympic Regional
Development Authority**

Year-Round Venue for Multi-Sport Recreation & Competition



World-Class Training and Event Facilities
Sport Programming for All Levels
Innovative Sport Development
Environmental Stewardship
Operational Efficiency



Olympic Regional
Development Authority

UMP & UMPAs for Mt Van Hoevenberg

1986 – First UMP

1996 – UMPA

- Cross Country Stadium Widening
- Cross Country Lodge Improvements
- Combined Bobsled/Luge Run
- Pave Biathlon Trails, Provide Snowmaking, and Night Lighting

1999 – UMPA

- Construction of New Combined Track

2018 – UMPA

- Construction of New Ski Trails and Snowmaking
- Construction of New Sliding Sports Start Facility and Base Lodge
- Develop Trailhead, Parking and Hiking Trail Connection for Cascade and Porter
- Construction of New Biathlon Stadium
- Construction of New Wastewater Disposal System

Proposed Management Actions



- ❑ Replacement of Refrigeration Infrastructure
- ❑ Upgrade and Install of Sunshade & Roofing Systems
- ❑ Repair to Track Curves and Surfaces
- ❑ Improve Site Access & Viewing
- ❑ Enhance Spectator Walkways
- ❑ Install People Mover
- ❑ Improve Start 1 & Replace Start 3 Buildings
- ❑ New Track Operations & Timing Building
- ❑ Improve Water and Wastewater Infrastructure
- ❑ Wax Cabins
- ❑ Construct World Cup Cross-Country Mountain Bike Course



Objectives of Management Actions

Modernize facilities for year-round recreation and competitions across multiple sports

Enhance sustainability through energy-saving technology and efficient operations

Maintain international standards for competition and athlete training experiences

Improve guest experiences with better access and enhanced viewing areas

Address drainage and stabilization issues

Continue ORDA's positive economic impact on the region and state

Ensure compliance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan



Public Comment - Lighting

Comment: Lighting from the sliding track should consider its impact on human and non-human life. A team including ORDA, APA, and a third party outside dark sky lighting expert should develop a review of ORDA's current and proposed lighting with a goal to minimize the amount, duration, and area of illumination.

Response: *The Unit Management Plan Amendment proposes to add new LED lights mounted to the track as part of the shade structures, which will be pointed downward toward the track. Other new lighting structures are low-level bollards for pedestrian safety. All lighting for outdoor pathways will be shielded. The Unit Management Plan Amendment Lighting section includes additional ongoing measures to reduce light pollution from the bobsled track such as creating more “zones” of lighting that could be individually controlled and implementing additional ability to dim the lighting within the different zones. Furthermore, this amendment builds on ORDA’s “OLYMPIC SPORTS COMPLEX EFFORTS TO MITIGATE LIGHT POLLUTION” as described in Appendix 2A of the approved 2018 Mt Van Hoevenberg Unit Management Plan Amendment.*

Public Comment – Refrigeration Plant

Comment: A narrative for alternative refrigeration plant utility line locations off the Forest Preserve should be provided and maps should be included to clearly show these underground utility lines.

Response: *The Unit Management Plan Amendment proposes the extended utility lines will utilize the existing footprint of a driveway and location of the existing condensers that will be relocated. Figure 17 depicts the location where underground utilities will go.*

Existing water, sanitary sewer and electric service connections for the proposed Refrigeration Plant are located in close proximity to the proposed building. These utilities are all located within the existing paved roadway in front of the existing refrigeration plant being replaced. The design team evaluated the routing of these utilities completely within the easement. However, this routing would require significantly longer runs that would extend through wooded areas and introduce multiple conflicts with existing utilities including the main refrigeration lines for the track. Based on the additional tree removal, disturbance of land and future maintenance considerations, utilizing the existing roadway and the area of the old refrigeration plant to extend utilities is the preferred option.

Public Comment – State Land Master Plan

Comment: The State Land Master Plan's description of Mount Van Hoevenberg's activities describes winter sports and raises the question as to whether bike trails are consistent with Article XIV at Mount Van Hoevenberg, Whiteface, and Gore Mountain Facilities.

Response: *The UCI Mountain Bike race event aligns with the goal to maintain Mt. Van Hoevenberg Intensive Use Area as a year-round sports facility. The 1999 Mt Van Hoevenberg Unit Management Plan Amendment states “[s]ummer recreators at Mount Van Hoevenberg can mountain-bike, horseback ride and hike on the cross-country and biathlon trails, use the biathlon target range, ride wheeled bobsleds and luges, and tour the Complex.” The 2018 Unit Management Plan Amendment takes this a step further by recognizing that mountain biking is one of the main forms of summer recreation at Mt Van Hoevenberg Intensive Use Area. The APSLMP states, “The primary management guideline for intensive use areas will be to provide the public opportunities for family group camping, developed swimming and boating, downhill skiing, cross country skiing under competitive or developed conditions on improved cross country ski trails, visitor information and similar outdoor recreational pursuits in a setting and on a scale that are in harmony with the relatively wild and undeveloped character of the Adirondack Park” (emphasis added). The APSLMP further states “the Mt. Van Hoevenberg Recreation Area should be maintained as a year-round sports facility meeting international standards for such sports as bobsled, luge, biathlon and cross country skiing on improved cross country ski trails under developed, competitive conditions” (APSLMP @ 45). All mountain biking infrastructure on Mt Van Hoevenberg is managed in accordance to the APSLMP rules managing intensive use areas.*

Public Comment – Mt Bike Trails

Comment: If the mountain bike trails on Forest Preserve lands are constructed following guidelines, the guidance documents should be included in the UMP.

Response: *The course section on Forest Preserve is located on preexisting cross-country ski trails which are seasonally managed for mountain bike use (1999 & 2018 Mt Van Hoevenberg UMP Amendments). The preexisting trails are temporarily delineated for the UCI mountain bike race events. Technical features on Town of North Elba easement lands are described in Exhibit 8 of the 2025 Mt Van Hoevenberg Unit Management Plan Amendment. There are no technical features proposed on the Forest Preserve section of trail. No new construction of mountain bike trails or associated features are proposed on Forest Preserve lands. Mountain bike trails constructed on the Town of North Elba Easement lands are not subject to Forest Preserve trail guidance.*

Public Comment – Mt Bike Trails

Comment: ORDA should provide detailed descriptions of how the mountain bike trails on the Forest Preserve will be constructed, maintained, and rehabilitated amidst a variety of conditions, a changing climate, and number of trail users.

Response: *No new construction of mountain bike trails or associated features are proposed on Forest Preserve lands. The Unit Management Plan Amendment includes construction specifications for features and the overall course. These specifications are set forth by UCI to ensure international competition standards are met. The course section that is on Forest Preserve is located on preexisting cross-country ski trails which are seasonally managed for mountain bike use (1999 & 2018 Mt Van Hoevenberg UMP Amendments). The preexisting trails are temporarily delineated for the UCI mountain bike race events. Course trail technical features are described in Exhibit 8 of the Unit Management Plan Amendment. There are no technical features proposed on the Forest Preserve section of trail.*

Public Comment – UMPA & Constitutional Amendment

Comment: None of the facilities proposed in this UMP that are intended to be located on the Forest Preserve should be constructed unless and until the constitutional amendment has received second passage in the Legislature and has been approved by the voters.

Response: *As noted above, no new trail construction is proposed on the Forest Preserve lands. Any new trail construction is proposed on town easement lands. Additionally, the realignment of the refrigeration plant removes this structure from the Forest Preserve. In June of 2023, a Concurrent Resolution of the New York State Senate and New York State Assembly (S5540/A2452) proposing an amendment to Section 1 of Article 14 of the New York State Constitution, in relation to the Mount Van Hoevenberg Olympic Sports Complex in Essex County was passed by both houses of the Legislature. Should the resolution achieve second passage during the 2025 Legislative Session, such an amendment could be presented to the voters in November 2025.*

Public Comment – Wax Cabins

Comment: The wax cabins must remain moveable until a constitutional amendment is passed.

Response: *The approved 2018 Mt Van Hoevenberg Unit Management Plan states, “existing parking lots would be used for the temporary waxing cabins”. Because the waxing cabins still remain in their location today this UMP amendment intends to inventory them, and their electrical supply, as structures currently conforming to intensive use area guidelines and not requiring a constitutional amendment. Note the wax cabins were designed on skids and thus can be moved as necessary.*

Public Comment – Reservoir & Fire Suppression

Comment: In the event that the reservoir’s liner should tear and the venue’s sole source of water for fire suppression eliminated, the Town of North Elba should recognize its responsibility regarding emergency resources.

Response: *See Exhibit 8 of the Public Draft Unit Management Plan Amendment that contained the document titled Construction Specification: Elevated Stone Riding Path Above Snowmaking Reservoir. Also, see Exhibit 9 that contained a figure entitled Reservoir Plan. The elevated mountain biking feature is partially comprised of a row of large rocks whose primary purpose is protection of the reservoir liner by preventing smaller uphill shot rock from sliding down the slope and into the reservoir where liner damage could occur. The following is from the Construction Specification in Exhibit 8 and describes how this reservoir protection has been integrated into the design of the riding path:*

“The existing row of large rocks would be enhanced by anchoring or pinning additional rocks to the existing ledge to ensure stability and safety. Above the enhanced row, natural stones with a flat and durable surface would be placed in lifts and compacted. All materials will be sourced on-site and rocks will not be excavated. The construction process will adhere to sustainable practices to minimize environmental impact.”

Public Comments – Not Related to APSLMP or Scope of UMPA

Comment: Commentor suggests paving the parking lot.

Response: *Thank you for your comment, however this is not related to the APSLMP or within the scope of this UMP amendment.*

Comment: Commenter raises issue of taxpayer spending to support improvements at ORDA facilities, requests the preferential treatment and use of local contractors, and suggests other uses of those monies.

Response: *Thank you for your comment, however this is not related to the APSLMP or within the scope of this UMP amendment.*

Public Comments in Support

Comment: Upgrades to the sliding track are appropriate and necessary for the venue to remain attractive as competition and training facility.

Response: *Thank you for your support of this proposal.*

Comment: Support the proposed amendments to the Unit Management Plan.

Response: *Thank you for your support of the amendment.*

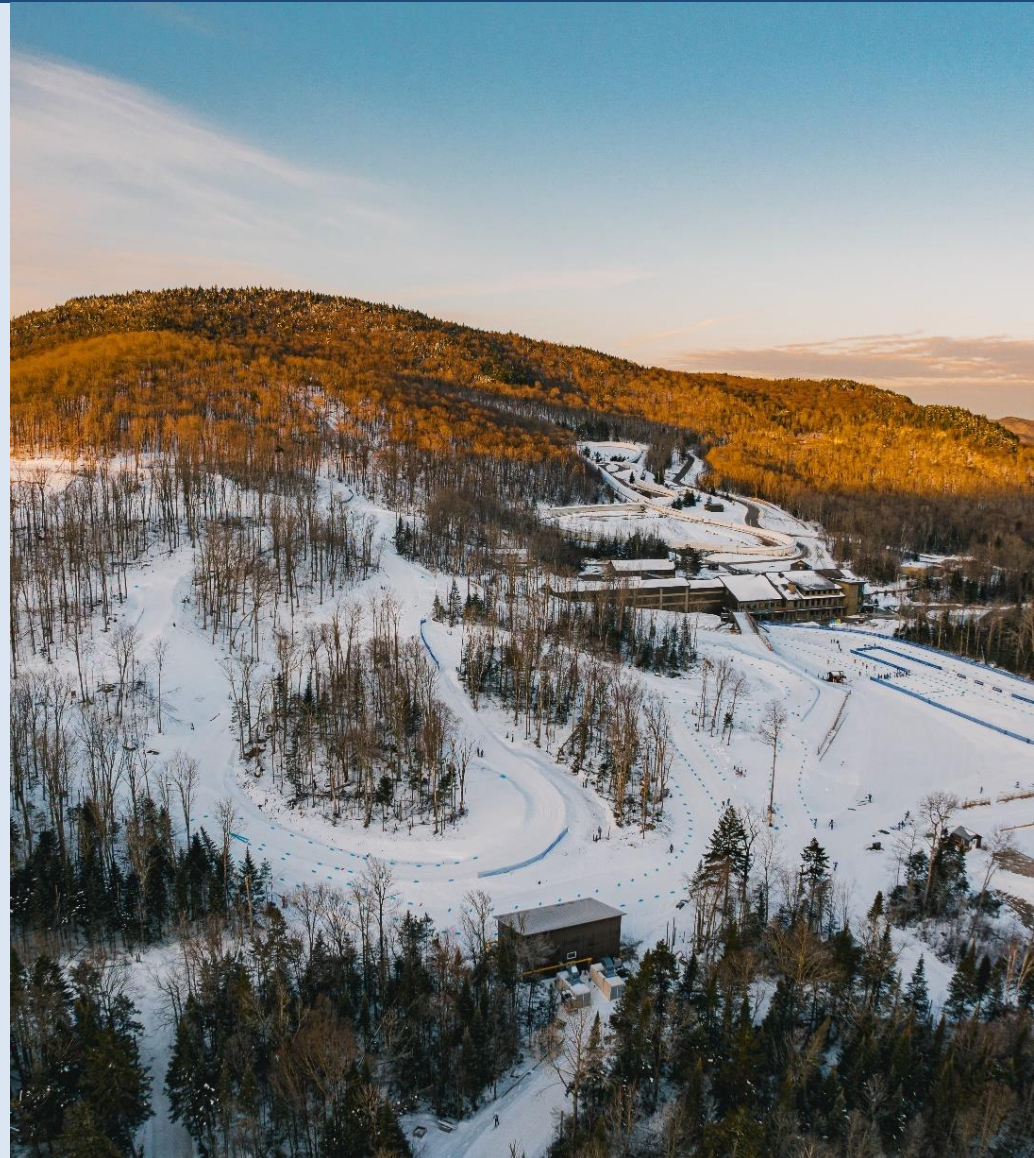
Comment: Supports the proposed amendments to the Unit Management Plan.

Response: *Thank you for your support of the amendment.*

Thank You

**Thank you for providing comments
and participating in this process.**

*No substantive changes were made to
the Draft UMPA since the closing of the
comment period.*





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