



Mid-Semester Update for the MWC

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Project Objective

Since 1969, the Mount Washington Commission has been tasked with managing the summit of Mount Washington. New Hampshire Revised Statute 227 requires the Commission to agree upon a shared vision for the Mount Washington summit, embodied within a master plan.

How can the Commission best approach the process of master planning in order to comply with its statutory obligation and articulate a shared vision for the future?



Master Plan Requirement – RSA 227-B

- Commission was created in 1969 "to manage the summit...property owned by the state" (227-B:1). Its **first** listed responsibility is master planning.
- Master plan is *required* every 10 years.
 - Historical note: Commission has made a master plan before, and gotten it approved. Commission developed the plan over 18 months in 1971.
 - No approved master plan since, but master plan drafted in 2010.
 - According to statute, plan must be submitted to governor on or before January 1 every 10 years for approval and for enabling legislation.
- The governor and council approve funds for capital improvements consistent with master plan.



Master Plan Requirement – RSA 227-B

- Master plan must include but is not limited to discussion of:
 - Capital improvements for 10-year period
 - Proposed operation of summit including fees for "facilities operated by the commission," personnel, and franchise agreements
 - Promotion of summit as "recreational, historic, and scientific" attraction
 - Protection of unique flora and natural resources of summit
 - Negotiation of public rights of way
 - Cooperative arrangements between private interests and commission (e.g. joint personnel, collection of fees)



Methodology

Assessment Data

Interviews

- **Commission Members (10 complete)**
- **Non-Commission Parties (8 complete)**

Direct observation
(MWC Meeting, 9/28
Site visit, 10/2)

Facilitated reflection exercise
(MWC Meeting 9/28)

Key Supporting Sources

Expert interviews
(2 complete)

Negotiation and dispute resolution theory

Statutory text (RSA 227) and background research on Commission members

Best practices from similar projects



Current Issues

Visitors

Facilities and
Infrastructure



Environmental
Impact

Economics



Preliminary Findings

1

MWC's current approach to addressing operational, short-term issues is not conducive to addressing long-term, strategic master planning.

- Current meeting structure promotes information-sharing rather than joint problem-solving.
- Meetings prioritize getting down to business over strengthening relationships.
- Meeting format does not ensure that all perspectives are heard.
- While Master Planning is an item on MWC agendas, little to no time has been devoted to it in recent years, as more pressing items take priority.
- Regular meetings lack broader public input, which interviewees noted as a priority for master planning.
- Discussions about contested issues in meetings often tend to be backward-looking rather than forward-looking.



Preliminary Findings

2

Zero-sum mindset impedes opportunities for collaboration.

- Partners have identified missed opportunities to create shared value, especially with respect to infrastructure improvements and visitor experience.
- Gap between partners' intentions and how behavior is interpreted by others creates tension.
- Information asymmetries engender distrust, which makes collaboration difficult.
- Positional behavior overshadows examples of cooperation at both staff and commission level.



Zero-sum mindsets are common defaults in negotiation and often lead to suboptimal outcomes. (Robert H. Mnookin, et al., *Beyond Winning: Negotiating to Create Value in Deals and Disputes* (1st ed. 2000)).



Preliminary Findings

3

Master planning presents an opportunity to resolve major sources of friction.

- Partners expressed optimism that master planning could help the MWC reach consensus on long-term issues.
- Regular commission meetings rarely present an opportunity to discuss partners' visions for the summit which range from a European chalet to a hiker's natural paradise.
- Partners have divergent expectations about decision-making roles and responsibilities.



Preliminary Recommendations

- 1 Master planning meetings should be distinct from regular meetings, both in time and format.**
- 2 Restructure interactions to identify and make the most of mutually beneficial opportunities.**
- 3 Engage a facilitator to guide conversation regarding unresolved major questions.**



Next Steps

What will you take away from today's session?

Is there any additional feedback you'd like to give us as we move toward drafting our final report and recommendations?

Is there any feedback that you would like to share on today's presentation and exercises?

