FACT SHEET

PIKES PEAK SUMMIT COMPLEX

Pikes Peak is the manifestation of the American spirit and desire to explore and experience our vast frontier. It is an extraordinary place to visit - almost the only place in the world where people of all ages and abilities can experience the summit of a 14,000-foot peak.

This is the setting for the Pikes Peak Summit Complex, a new building designed to enhance the experience of reaching the top. The facility's careful placement and sensitive design puts the focus on the stunning landscape, allowing boundless sky and views to take center stage.

The new 38,000-square-foot Pikes Peak Summit Complex opened to the public on June 24, 2021 after three years of construction. The complex is comprised of three facilities: the Pikes Peak Summit Visitor Center, the Colorado Springs Utilities Communications Facility and the U.S. Army's High Altitude Research Laboratory.

Key Project Partners

City of Colorado Springs - Olympic City USA
Pikes Peak - America's Mountain
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
The Broadmoor Manitou & Pikes Peak Cog Railway
U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine
Colorado Springs Utilities

Architecture
GWWO Architects (Baltimore, Md.)
RTA Architects (Colorado Springs)

Construction
GE Johnson (Colorado Springs)

Project Consultants
AECOM, extreme climate consultant (Denver and Anchorage, Alaska)
BranchPattern, MEP engineering (Denver)
DHM Design, landscape architecture (Denver)
Gallagher & Associates, exhibit design (Silver Spring, Md.)
HCDA Engineering, Inc., structural engineering (Colorado Springs)
Kiowa Engineering Corporation, civil engineering (Colorado Springs)

DESIGNED TO STRIKE THE PERFECT BALANCE BETWEEN A DYNAMIC BUILDING THAT PRESENTS A CLEAR DESTINATION TO VISITORS AND A MINIMALIST STRUCTURE DEFERENTIAL TO THE PEAK AND ITS MAJESTIC VIEWS

STORYLINES

Enhanced visitor experience

No matter how visitors get to the top – by car, rail, foot, bike or bus – the reinvigorated summit experience offers the chance to learn more about the past, present and future of America's Mountain. New interpretive exhibits share facts on the mountain's history, climate, geography, recreational opportunities, conservation initiatives and more. The indoor exhibit gallery includes interactive, digital features that allow visitors to weave their own personal experiences into the mountain's story. Outside, interpretive rails around the summit describe the environment and the views, identify key landscape features and share interesting stories.

Striking architecture, natural design

The building seems to be "of the mountain" rather than on the mountain with its form and materials complementing the crags and rock formations of the peak. The design accommodated a challenging construction process in an extreme climate where winter temperatures can reach as low as negative 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Durable materials, such as high-performance glass, were rigorously tested and chosen to withstand harsh environmental conditions.

Sustainability in action

A top priority of the new building is caring for the summit's environment. The project is striving to become the first Living Building Challenge certified project in Colorado with sustainable design aspects focused on energy, building materials, resilience, site ecology, site water and wastewater. It also aims to achieve net zero energy, net zero waste and net zero water consumption. It is designed to save more than 350,000 gallons of water per year over the current system.

Balancing conservation and tourism

Pikes Peak lies within the Pike National Forest. The peak, above 14,000 feet, was designated as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) on July 4, 1961, and is one of only 25 NHLs in Colorado. The U.S. Forest Service ensures that the conservation of this national treasure and its watershed, supplying surrounding communities, is given a high priority.

Farewell, Summit House

The 1964 Summit House has been demolished and removed. The decorative plaque previously located in the former overlook area in honor of Katharine Lee Bates' poem "America the Beautiful," is now located on the new eastern overlook. The poem was inspired by Bates' historic journey to the summit in 1893,

BY THE NUMBERS

45 PERCENT

ENERGY REDUCTION COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS SUMMIT HOUSE

230 MILES PER HOUR

WIND SPEED THAT GLASS WAS TESTED TO WITHSTAND

400

PERMATRAK PLANKS AND BEAMS SURROUNDING THE EXTERIOR

1,500 POUNDS

WEIGHT OF THE NEW DONUT MACHINE, WHICH USES A TOP-SECRET RECIPE PASSED DOWN SINCE 1916

14,115 FEET

ALTITUDE OF PIKES PEAK, MAKING IT THE HIGHEST VISITOR CENTER IN THE UNITED STATES

1 MILLION

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF VISITORS WELCOMED ANNUALLY TO THE SUMMIT OF PIKES PEAK

$65 MILLION

EXPECTED FINAL COST;
ZERO CITY TAX DOLLARS USED

Site Plan

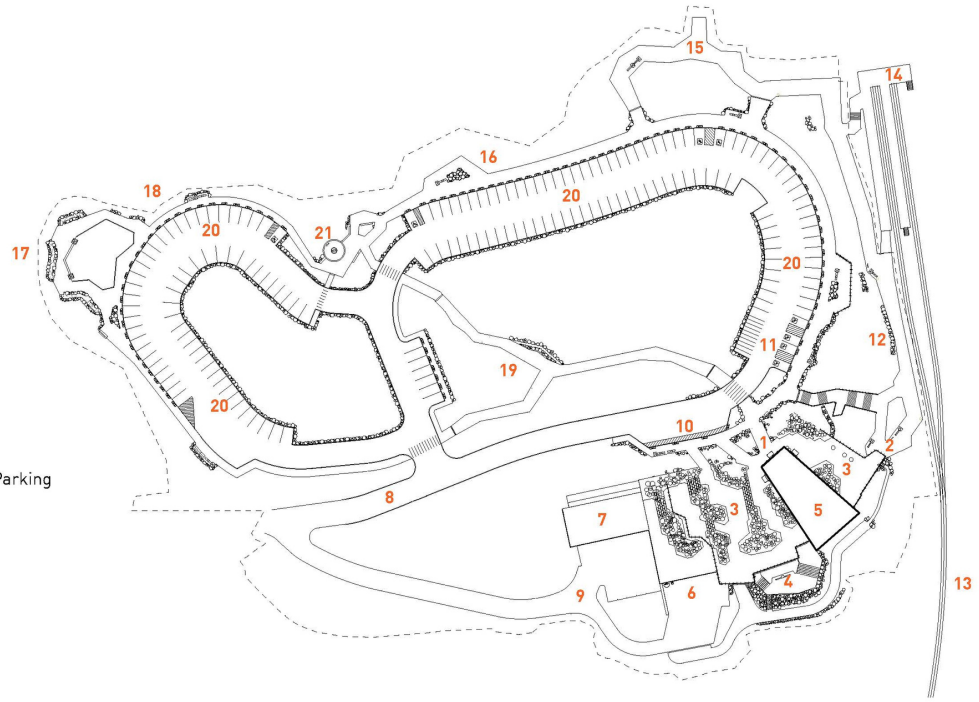
Scale: 1/128" = 1'-0"

0 20 40 80 160

NORTH

Legend

1 Upper Level Entrance
2 Lower Level Entrance
3 Roof Terrace
4 Dining Terrace
5 Summit Visitor Center
6 Plant & Utilities
7 High Alt. Research Lab
8 Pikes Peak Highway
9 Service Drive
10 Shuttle Drop-Off
11 Motorcycle & Handicapped Parking
12 Historic Summit House Wall
13 Cog Railway
14 Barr Trail Access
15 North Overlook
16 Central Overlook
17 West Overlook
18 Devils Playground Trail
19 Elevated Walkway
20 Parking
21 Summit Marker



Main Level Floor Plan

Scale: 1/32" = 1'-0"

0 5 10 20 30

NORTH

Legend

1 Lower Level Entrance
2 Lower Lobby
3 Main Stair
4 Exhibit
5 Retail
6 Dining
7 Servery
8 Kitchen
9 Office
10 Office
11 Staff Room
12 EMT
13 Restrooms
14 Closet
15 Storage
16 Custodial