

Mount Ecos

Mount Ecos is the working title for a conceptual mixed-use development complex to be located on the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) site in Arden Hills. This novel development would propel the profile of the Twin Cities area to that of a world competitor in ecopreneurialism. This innovative and unique complex, conceptualized by BluCentral, would not only dramatically increase the area tax base and revenues via increased tourism, but would obviate major traffic concerns while enhancing conservation of area natural resources.

Mount Ecos offers innovative solutions to increasing local demands

The Twin Cities are known nationally for many impressive qualities, including the green-spaces-per-person ratio inside the metropolitan area. We are all familiar with local tourist attractions such as an enormous mall, a national amusement park, lakes, water-related amenities and an internationally-recognized arts and cultural community. Arguably, something the greater Twin Cities area lacks is impressive topography. The Twin Cities also cannot compete with other tourist sites that offer year-round sun or warm bodies of water for recreational use during long winter months. BluCentral would like to change a portion or all of that.

Mount Ecos would increase our regional economic base and international exposure by creating an environmentally-integrated, technologically advanced, evolving, and low-carbon development that encompasses housing and commercial, retail and indoor/outdoor recreational facilities in a sophisticated living ecosystem AND tourism complex. **This complex is in fact built inside an engineered “natural” mountain.** While the Mount Ecos development may seem overly ambitious, the concept of a utilitarian, multi-functional, man-made mountain complex is not implausible or even novel, as illustrated by the attached images.

Project Highlights

- **NO LOCAL TRAFFIC:** An element that sets Mount Ecos apart from other engineered mountain complexes AND TCAAP development proposals is **BluCentral’s** solution to increased traffic and parking requirements through its incorporation of **Skytram**, an indoor/outdoor transit system that utilizes electric vehicles to transport visitors, workers and residents to and from off-site parking ramps.
- **Eco System preservation, conservation and enhancement:** The Mount Ecos complex would be one of the most environmentally sensitive and advanced eco-developments in North America. With assistance from top Green Building Council architects as well as local green builders and developers, the Mount Ecos development would augment protection of the Rice Creek Watershed and natural spaces in the surrounding area by incorporating key elements of Bruce Vento’s 1994 TCAAP Reutilization Committee’s Final Recommendations.
- **Housing:** Housing components of the project would be diverse and cover critical area needs for an aging population and young working families by incorporating senior housing, a condo tower(s) and rental units.

- **Community services:** Mount Ecos would dramatically increase long-term area employment and generate additional funding for city and county services. BluCentral intends to dedicate a percentage of Mount Ecos revenues and profits to designated local municipal services such as business and jobs development assistance as well as the creation of an entrepreneurial development center.
- **Commercial/retail:** Anchor tenants for Mount Ecos would include fitness and natural entertainment attractions such as an indoor/outdoor bike trail with accompanying bike and skiing retailers, Life Time Fitness (or something similar), etc.
- **Tourism/Entertainment:** Mount Ecos would host the region's largest and finest ski resort, water park and "natural" entertainment attraction, but precludes the development of an amusement park as a central component. The Mount Ecos complex plan includes performing additional research on developing the largest and most natural indoor/outdoor patio restaurant/bar, a possible lake beachfront and a year-round, 16-hour-a-day sun dome.

Comparable site dimensions

Preliminary research on comparable site dimensions shows that the Mount Ecos complex easily fits within the TCAAP site area. See page 24 for dimensions of relevant structures and familiar Disney complexes.

Design

Also attached are design concepts and images of projects currently under development for similar man-made mountain complexes worldwide. Mount Ecos would look The Berg imagery on the following page, but with a living complex inside and outside.

BluCentral intends to pursue the development of Mount Ecos as an experiment in public participation. Since we are not developers, we intend to help drive public support in the discussion and hopefully planning and realization of this showcase option for ecological design and development in North America.

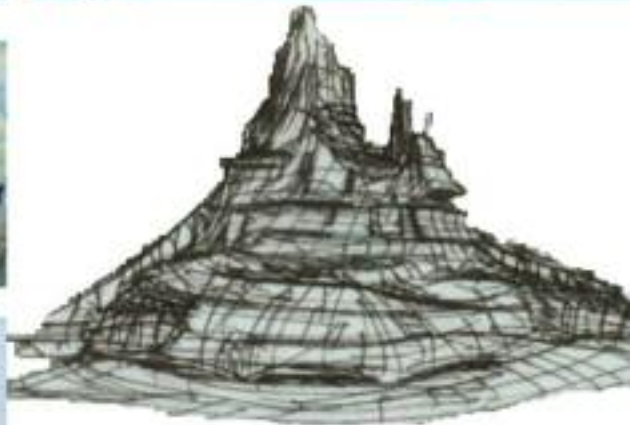
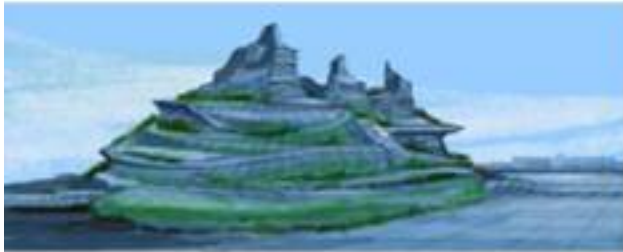
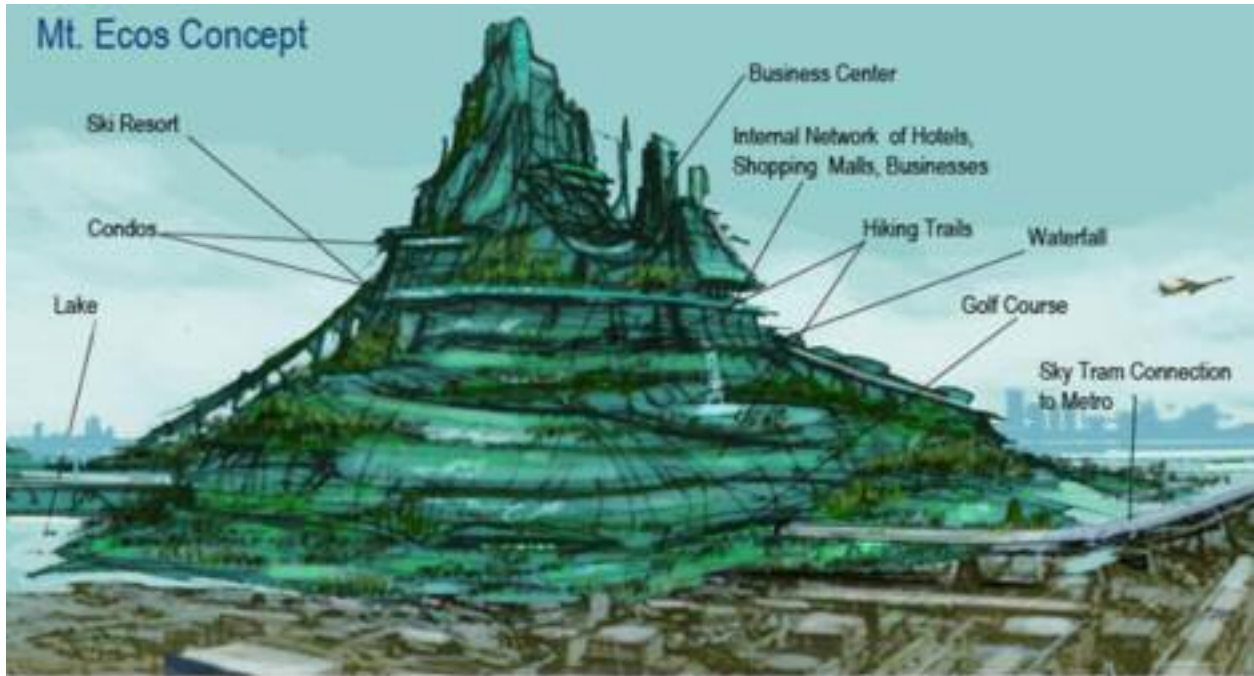
Conclusion

The Twin Cities is at a crucial point in the development of the extraordinary TCAAP site. While we have a reputation for being environmentally-conscious and boast one of the healthiest, most active populations in the nation, right now we have a singular opportunity to propel the Twin Cities onto the international stage as leaders in eco-friendly design, commercial and retail development, housing and tourism all in one novel complex.

We at BluCentral believe there is enormous potential to bring jobs, revenue and innovative solutions to local concerns through cutting-edge design combined with novel methods of ecological preservation and commercial innovation; and it begins with the concept of a Mount Ecos development. Let's find out what the public thinks.

As this is an introduction to the Mount Ecos concept, we welcome and encourage feedback. Please direct any questions and/or comments to PolicyNexus@comcast.net.

BluCentral would be involved with conceptual development of the Mount Ecos project and partner with area and major developers, architects and engineers to execute the project's construction. ■



Gallery: The Berg, a Man-Made Mountain in Germany



(images via: archdaily)

The Berg, a multi-functional, large-scale, man-made mountain. The Berg contains no amusement park features, such as the roller coaster on Space Mountain in Tomorrowland. Upon completion, The Berg would be the largest artificial mountain in the world, designed as a tourist attraction in Berlin, Germany, that would provide a wildlife refuge and recreational space for the city's inhabitants.

Relevant Structure Dimensions

World's tallest building	Approximately 2,700 feet
Base dimensions of tallest building	Approximately 500 plus feet
Mounts and mountains in 2,500 feet range	Too numerable to note – several in Minnesota
Shortest mountain in US	Diamond Head in Hawaii at 761 feet
Height of Lutsen Mountains	Approximately 1,900 feet
Acreage of Afton Alps Ski Resort	Approximately 350
Estimated height of Mount Ecos	Approximately 2,500 plus feet

Disney Park and Resort Sizes

Below are the sizes of all current Disney parks and resorts worldwide.

DISNEYLAND RESORT - 510 acres (Walt originally bought 160 acres.)

Disneyland - 85 acres

Disney's California Adventure - 55 acres (Will expand to 67 acres with Carsland.)

Downtown Disney - 20 acres

WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT - 25,000 acres (Walt originally bought 27,400, but pieces have been sold.)

Magic Kingdom - 107 acres

Epcot - 305 acres

Disney's Hollywood Studios - 135 acres

Disney's Animal Kingdom - 410 acres (500 including parking lots)

Disney's Typhoon Lagoon - 56 acres (this may include parking lots)

Disney's Blizzard Beach - 66 acres (this may include parking lots)

Downtown Disney - 120 acres (this may include parking lots)

Pleasure Island - 8 acres

ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex - 220 acres

TOKYO DISNEYLAND RESORT - 494 acres

Tokyo Disneyland - 115 acres

Tokyo DisneySea - 176 acres

DISNEYLAND RESORT PARIS - 4,800 acres

Disneyland Paris - 140 acres

Walt Disney Studios Paris - 62 acres

HONG KONG DISNEYLAND RESORT - 311 acres

Hong Kong Disneyland - 55 acres

(Will expand to 68 acres with Grizzly Gulch, Mystic Point and Toy Story Land.)

CASTAWAY CAY (Disney's private island) - 1,000 acres (Only 55 are developed.)

Total Disney Acreage: 32,115

Total Acreage of Parks: 1,552 (1,430 without waterparks)

Largest Resort: Walt Disney World Resort

Smallest Resort: Hong Kong Disneyland Resort

Largest Park: Disney's Animal Kingdom

Smallest Park: Disney's California Adventure

Average Park Size: 130 acres ■