

April 28, 2020



Re: Snow King Base Area Master Plan Amendment – 3rd Reading

Dear Mayor Muldoon & Town Councilors,

First, thank you for your leadership during the coronavirus pandemic. We appreciate how you have prioritized the safety of our community, especially our most vulnerable neighbors.

Second, I apologize for not commenting on this topic until the 3rd reading. Like many people in the community, we have been almost entirely focused on dealing with the coronavirus and resulting economic impacts, and just learned that this topic was on your agenda next week. I hope that late is better than never! *Going forward, please table highly controversial and non-essential business – like the upcoming zip line application – until our community can focus on “normal life” again.* Before you enact this ordinance, we want to make sure the record is clear on two matters:

This amendment is an enormous missed opportunity for a win-win solution for Snow King and our community. After years of discussion, you were incredibly close to a touchdown – but this amendment stops just short at the one-yard line. Both the Jackson Hole Ski & Snowboard Club and we at the Alliance asked clearly for one thing: *a fee on commercial activity at the base that would support ski area operations year-in, year-out.* This proposal had wide community support, is a fair trade for the million square foot upzone that investors received years ago, and would have ended the “we need lots of amusement development to be financially sustainable” argument once and for all. *We still believe such fee support is the key to a lasting win-win solution for Snow King.* We can have a Town Hill with a solid financial future while retaining everything our community loves so much about it, without harmful changes like boundary expansions and zip lines. Imagine a community-run Town Hill focused on ski racing, teaching kids, and uphill exercise – like the amazing use (and community support for grooming) we’ve seen this spring. This better future for Snow King is possible.

The Forest Service Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is flawed from top to bottom. As we detailed in our [comment letter to the Forest Service](#), the DEIS prepared by a Utah consultant needs to be re-done from scratch. Documents uncovered by a Freedom of Information Act request show how key agency staff colluded with the developer to rig the process – including a biased presentation to you (see pg. 9-10 in our comment letter – and thank you for not falling for that presentation!). The DEIS breaks an incredible number of federal and Forest Service rules, simply failed to analyze the proposals’ impacts to wildlife, and needs to be re-done from start to finish. We hope that you don’t use anything in the DEIS to justify support for proposed developments. We will strenuously object to the DEIS until it’s done right. In the meantime, we hope that you will use the leverage you have to stand up for our community and our shared values, and push back against harmful development ideas on Town, private, and Forest Service land.

Please push just a little harder to get a true win for our community and Snow King, get an annual fee to support ski area operations, and reject the flawed DEIS.

Sincerely,

Skye Schell
Executive Director

Protecting the wildlife, wild places, and community character of Jackson Hole.

685 S. Cache St. • P.O. Box 2728 • Jackson, WY 83001 • (307) 733-9417 • info@jhalliance.org • JHalliance.org