



STATE OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

District II
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Sparks, Nevada 89431
(775) 834-8300 FAX (775) 834-8319

March 29, 2018

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

RUDY MALFABON, P.E., Director

USDA Forest Service
Attn: William A. Dunkelberger, Forest Supervisor
1200 Franklin Way
Sparks, NV 89431
Comments-intermttn-humboldt-toiyabe-carson@fs.fed.us

RE: DEIS for the Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe Atoma Area Expansion Project

Mr. Dunkelberger,

The Nevada Department of Transportation District II (NDOT) appreciates the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) scope for the Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe's *Atoma Area Expansion* project (documents dated January 2018). A summary of the three alternatives are below:

- Alternative 1: No action- no amendment needed.
- Alternative 2: Special use permit (SUP) amended to expand ski boundary by 112 acres to incorporate a portion of the Atoma Area. This includes eleven new ski trails (novice & beginner skiers), 3,500-ft chairlift circulating up to 2,000 skiers/hr, 130-ft ski bridge over State Route 431 (Mount Rose Highway), and a snowmaking facility.
- Alternative 3: All components described are the same as Alternative 2, except the design would place the chairlift directly above the proposed skier bridge. In order to accommodate this design, a two-lift configuration and one additional acre of clearing and grading are needed.

NDOT supports community development and its positive impact on the community. If NDOT's safety and operational concerns are addressed as the project progresses, amending the SUP is feasible and encouraged. After careful consideration of DEIS Alternative 2 and 3, NDOT supports the preliminary design concept for Alternative 3 compared to Alternative 2. Aligning the chairlift directly above the skier bridge minimizes the operational and safety impacts on Mt. Rose Highway. Primary concern with a chairlift operation over a highway is the necessary mitigation to prevent objects from falling onto vehicles and bicyclists. Placing a net to catch falling objects is a common practice. However, the netting may accumulate snow and/or change the snow fall characteristics over the roadway. Additionally, chairlift maintenance operations would have less impact highway operations. Placing the skier bridge under the chairlift appears to be the most reasonable solution. Considering public safety, Alternative 3 is the preferred alternative.

Please see NDOT's comments regarding Alternative 3 for Mount Rose Ski Tahoe's special-use authorization application from their accepted master development plan (MDP) to improve the quality of the ski area's recreational offerings on National Forest System (NFS) land:

Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) has five roadway system types. Mount Rose Highway (2-lane) is classified as a “State Route”. State routes are generally functionally classified higher than “Local” and include secondary state routes, primary county routes and other roadways that connect cities and towns with the primary highway system. In addition, State Route 431, Mount Rose Highway, is designated as a Scenic Byway. In 2016, the annual average daily traffic (AADT) was approximately 4,800.

1. Ski chairlift facility over State Route 431 (Mount Rose Highway) comments:

- a) Additional information requested for the structure:
 - i) What is the height of the chairlift over Mount Rose Highway?
 - ii) What is the distance of the chairlift piers to Mount Rose Highway?
- b) Additional information requested for the maintenance operations:
 - i) With the proposed design, what are the traffic impacts for emergency and routine maintenance?
- c) Visibility of the chairlift system will be noticed by the highway users. NDOT recommends buy-in from local jurisdictional stakeholders on the proposal’s aesthetics.

2. Skier bridge facility over State Route 431 (Mount Rose Highway) comments:

- a) Draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) alternatives only consider a bridge crossing. Have other alternatives, such as a tunnel, been considered? While a bridge may be the best solution, NDOT would like to know if other proposals were considered and their positives and negatives.
- b) Bridge structure design considerations:
 - i) What are the bridge load capabilities?
 - ii) NDOT is concerned with drainage impacts. Additional information on the proposed structure drainage (stormwater runoff/dust control/icicle forming prevention) would be helpful.
 - iii) What are the bridge pier locations and their proximity to Mount Rose Highway?
 - iv) What is the vertical clearance of the structure (for vehicles)?
 - v) Based on federal requirements, structure lighting may be needed.
 - vi) What design concepts are being considered to mitigate pedestrians and objects from falling from the bridge onto the roadway?
 - vii) Are there any proposals to run utilities on the bridge structure?
 - viii) Based on federal requirements, a ventilation may be needed for the structure.
 - ix) Proposed bridge location is on a horizontal curve. What was the design considerations for identifying this location?
 - (1) During winter weather, structures may present additional roadway safety concerns. Weather phenomena created from structure may occur such as snow accumulation, wind tunnel effects, shadowing- resulting in ice on the roadway, accumulation of moisture, etc. Ice formations at the ingress and egress locations where vehicles pass under the bridge may be problematic on a roadway curve.
 - (2) Placing a bridge over a highway may decrease sight distance. Additional review and justification for the placement of the bridge structure is needed. Ideally, placing the structure on a roadway tangent would be preferred.
- c) Mt Rose Ski/NDOT maintenance operation comments:

- i) For Mt. Rose Ski skier bridge operations, how does the operations affect the highway (prevention of snow/ice/soils from falling onto the road)?
 - ii) Bridge maintenance responsibilities need to be clearly defined by all parties and agreed upon (executed maintenance agreement) prior to any NDOT permit issuance. Routine operations/ maintenance, repair/replacement and emergency response duties are critical to the public safety of Mt. Rose Ski patrons, and the traveling public.
 - iii) The structure's potential impact to the NDOT's winter snow operations is not clear. Additional information and discussion is necessary to determine how both parties may successfully complete their operations.
 - d) Providing the construction phases on Mount Rose Highway would be helpful.
 - e) As a Scenic Byway, what design considerations were considered?
3. Mt. Rose Ski encroachments into NDOT right-of-way. All encroachments (temporary and permanent) shall require a permit. For existing permitted facilities, design changes will require a new permit application. The permit application shall be signed by the facility owner.
- a) Identifying all driveways/access (utility/maintenance/public) onto Mount Rose Highway within the corridor. All driveways must be permitted by NDOT. Preliminary discuss of access is needed prior to a permit application submittal.
 - b) Identify all necessary utilities within the NDOT right-of-way for the proposal.
 - c) When considering the increase in traffic (pedestrian/bicycle/motor vehicle) generated with the site expansion, a traffic study may be necessary for an NDOT permit. Will traffic be consistent between winter and summer activities provided by the expansion?
 - d) Confirmation that the proposal provides adequate parking off NDOT right-of-way. For public safety, it is important that the proposal does not influence parking in the right-of-way.
 - e) Identifying the locations and number of tree removals needed for the proposal.
4. There is a concern that the proposed snow-making operation may impact Mount Rose Highway. With the increase in snow making capabilities, how will those operations affect Mount Rose Highway (ice and snow on roadway) and what mitigations are in place to prevent the snow from accumulating on the roadway?
5. NDOT would like more information regarding emergency operations and the elements needed for immediate response. This includes, but it not limited to, power, equipment, response protocols, communications, access, and infrastructure.

Comments specific to the NDOT permitting process are below:

- 6. Existing occupancy permits are personal; however, the upkeep and repair responsibilities shall transfer to the property owner's successor. Actual work being performed in the NDOT right-of-way cannot be transferred without prior written approval from NDOT. If the property changes use, the new property owner will need to apply for a new occupancy permit for access to the state highway.
- 7. An occupancy permit is required for facilities within the NDOT right-of-way. Please see the *Terms and Conditions Relating to Right of Way Occupancy Permits* (2017 edition) booklet available online at nevadadot.com. Contact the Permit Office at (775) 834-8330 for more information regarding an occupancy permit.

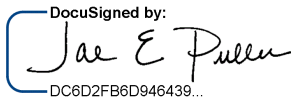
8. NDOT may require a performance or cash bond, to ensure the successful and timely completion of improvements, as a guarantee that the work will be completed accordance with the terms of the occupancy permit. Performance bonds provided to other public agencies may be used in lieu of this requirement at the discretion of the District Engineer. Evidence of this bond should be submitted with permit.
9. For any non-permanent activities or temporary traffic control such as placement of cones, static signs, and portable electronic signs within NDOT right-of-way will require a temporary permit. Please submit temporary permit applications at least 4 weeks prior to the scheduled activity or work. Contact the Permit Office for more information.
10. The applicant is encouraged to coordinate with the Permit Office early for any required occupancy permit (access management, hydraulic design and drainage facilities, maintenance agreements, roadway abandonment, intersection control evaluation, leases, etc.). NDOT's permit processing time may vary based on project complexity; however, the processing time is approximately forty-five (45) working days. This does not include any revision time needed to make necessary changes in the design. Significant design applications may take more than one revision, please allow adequate planning and schedule ahead.
11. An effective strategy to minimize delay is taking advantage of the Permit Office's Pre-Permit process. Preliminary plans and associated engineering documents may be submitted in advance for NDOT review and comment. This service does not require a processing fee. Please contact the Permit Coordinator, Paula Diem, at (775) 834-8330 for any questions or comments regarding the pre-permit process.
12. Applicant is encouraged to coordinate with NDOT on the traffic impact study and seek NDOT's acceptance of the study early in the development planning process. NDOT Permit Office will require an NDOT acceptance letter for any traffic impact study submitted with a permit application. For questions and comments, please contact Mr. O.J. Oujevolk at the Traffic Office, (775) 834-8304.
13. Prior to any grading adjacent to NDOT right-of-way, a drainage report, including a grading plan, and a Drainage Form must be submitted to the Permit Office. Please contact the Permit Office for more information.
14. Applicant is responsible for mitigating any project site drainage within the property. Drainage facilities within NDOT right-of-way is not recommended. Any proposal with facilities within the NDOT right-of-way will require a license or lease.
15. It is the permit applicant's responsibility to perform title research and identify if the state has purchased access and abutters rights for the parcel where an access is proposed. Any break in the access control will need to be processed through the state surplus property committee. This process can be quite lengthy, and success is not guaranteed.
16. Any truck haul operations that access the state highway system will require a temporary permit and coordination with NDOT Permit Office at (775)834-8330.
17. If the needed temporary traffic control is not available from the NDOT Standards, site specific temporary traffic control shall be provided. A temporary traffic control plan (TCP) shall be prepared and signed by an American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) Traffic Control Supervisor or a Professional Traffic Operations Engineer, certified by ITE.
18. Applicant shall be responsible into perpetuity for all maintenance of plants, shrubs and trees and related irrigation systems installed on NDOT right-of-way. All shrubs and plant material placed within the right-of-way must be low profile. The shrub and plant height shall be two feet or lower

from existing ground and shall be maintained to ensure adequate sight distance for the traveling public. All trees must have a four (4) inch caliper or less at maturity.

19. A minimum onsite stacking length of 50 feet of as required by NDOT and an adequately sized turnaround outside the gate is required prior to any locked gate. Vehicle stacking at a gate shall not back up into the adjacent street right-of-way.
20. The Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) prohibits advertising within NDOT right-of-way. Please refer to NRS 405.110 Unlawful advertising on or near a highway or on bridge. Signs for advertising will not be allowed within NDOT right-of-way. Please ensure sign base, post and sign edge is outside of NDOT right-of-way.
21. The property owner must provide adequate parking on the property. NDOT does not issue permits for long term parking for business use. Per the Nevada Revised Statutes 484B.457, if operations impact safety and/or traffic flow, NDOT may install "NO PARKING" signs along this section of roadway.
22. The state defers to municipal government for land use development decisions. Public involvement for community development related improvements within the NDOT right-of-way should be considered during the municipal land use development public involvement process. Significant public improvements within the NDOT right-of-way developed after the municipal land use development public involvement process may require additional public involvement. It is the responsibility of the permit applicant to perform such additional public involvement. We would encourage such public involvement to be part of a municipal land use development process.

NDOT reserves the right to incorporate further changes and/or comments as the proposal advances. I look forward to working with you and your team, and completing a successful project. Please feel free to contact me at (775)834-8300, if you have any further questions or comments.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Jae E. Pullen, P.E., PTOE
Engineering Services Manager

03/29/2018

JEP:tms

Enclosure ()

CC:

Thor Dyson, NDOT District Engineer
Mike Fuess, NDOT District ADE, Maintenance
Ruth Borrelli, NDOT Chief of Right-of-Way
Jessen Mortenson, NDOT Chief Structures Engineer
Steve Cook, NDOT Environmental Services Chief
Charles Wolf, NDOT Chief Hydraulic Engineer
Ryan Hornback, NDOT District Special Projects
Brad Burge, NDOT District Maintenance Manager
Richard Oujevolk, NDOT Traffic
Paula Diem, NDOT Permit Coordinator
Marnie Bonesteel, mbonesteel@fs.fed.us
File



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

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STATE OF NEVADA

2018 JAN 19 AM 10:27 File Code: 1950; 2720

Date: JAN 09 2018

NDOT
RENO DISTRICT II OFFICE

Dear Interested Agencies,

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Carson Ranger District, USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe Atoma Area Expansion project, to analyze and disclose the environmental effects of ski area projects. The ski area is located on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Washoe County, Nevada and operates in accordance with the terms and conditions of a special use permit (SUP), which is administered by the Carson Ranger District. Enclosed is a hardcopy of the document and/or CD. Additional information is available online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=41487>.

Comments on this DEIS will be accepted for 90 days following publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register. This comment period is the designated opportunity for public participation. The publication date of the NOA in the Federal Register is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this Proposed Action.

Written comments must be submitted to William A. Dunkelberger, Forest Supervisor 1200 Franklin Way, Sparks, Nevada, 89431. Facsimiles can be sent to (775) 355-5399. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, pdf, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), and Word (.doc or .docx). They can be uploaded to the "Comments/Objection on Project" section of the project website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=41487> under "get connected," or email comments to comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe-carson@fs.fed.us.

For additional information, please contact Marnie Bonesteel, Team Leader, at (775) 352-1240 or mbonesteel@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

for WILLIAM A. DUNKELBERGER
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure

