

SCOTT SPIELMAN
P.O. Box 388, Norwood, CO 81423

February 29, 2024

The Town of Telluride appreciates the opportunity to provide initial feedback on the U.S. Forest Service's Environmental Assessment (EA) of the proposed improvement projects at Telluride Ski Resort. These comments are submitted as part of the scoping phase and reflect the Town's early priorities and considerations.

We are broadly supportive of the project's stated purpose—to **enhance the guest experience by modernizing lift infrastructure and expanding recreational opportunities on the GMUG National Forest**—and we recognize the importance of this process for the long-term success of the resort and the surrounding communities.

The following represents the Town's preliminary input, with the intention to submit a more detailed and comprehensive comment during the next formal comment period. In the meantime, we respectfully offer these initial points for early consideration

Lift 7 Replacement

The Town strongly supports the replacement of Lift 7 and encourages the U.S. Forest Service to require a **detachable quad** with a capacity of **2,400 people per hour (pph)** to bring service levels in line with industry standards and regional expectations.

Key considerations include:

- A significant portion of the Town's year-round population, regional visitor accommodations, and the Telluride Middle/High School are located within a 5-minute walk of Lift 7. This lift provides the most direct and accessible portal for locals, families, and students.
- The current low ridership is likely due to both the **real and perceived safety concerns** and the outdated nature of the existing 1975 fixed-grip double chair.
- For years, the Town of Mountain Village has offered modern high-speed quad access, while the Town of Telluride remains reliant on vintage lifts over 40 years old.
- Has the Forest Service evaluated whether the proposed alignment of Lift 7 will extend to the top of Lookout, as previously communicated by TSG? This alignment could significantly impact access and terrain usability for Town-based skiers and riders.

Lift 8 Replacement

The Town recommends the replacement of Lift 8 with at least a **fixed or detachable quad chair** to improve uphill capacity and maintain reliable access between the Town of Telluride and Mountain Village via Lift 9.

Additional points for consideration:

- The **bottom terminal** of Lift 8 and the Telluride-Mountain Village- Gondola is becoming increasingly congested due to growing winter and summer activity. A **top-drive configuration** should be considered to reduce the infrastructure footprint at the base, if technically feasible.
- The one-acre disturbance proposed on TSR-owned private land at the bottom terminal should be **minimized to the greatest extent practicable** given these site constraints.

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- We recommend **revisiting the policy of closing Lift 8 daily at 1:30 p.m.**, which reduces the reliability of skier return access to Town and may undermine overall connectivity.
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Additional Considerations

- **Equity in Lift Infrastructure:** We request that the EA acknowledge the disparity between access provided to Mountain Village and the Town of Telluride and explore how lift replacements can address this imbalance.
- **Environmental Impacts:** While most forest health and glading work is outside the Town boundary, we anticipate community interest in potential **helicopter use, wetland impacts, and noise/vibration effects.**
- **Early Season Access:** The Town strongly supports enhanced **early-season snowmaking** on the north side of the resort to better serve the largest population base adjacent to ski lifts on USFS land.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zoe Dohnal', written over a horizontal line.

ZOE DOHNAL
TOWN MANAGER - TOWN OF TELLURIDE
P.O. BOX 397, TELLURIDE, CO 81435