



October 28, 2022

Scott Fitzwilliams, Forest Supervisor
900 Grand Avenue
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

RE: Town of Basalt Objection Comments on the El Jebel Administrative Site Conveyance Project

Dear Mr. Fitzwilliams:

The Town of Basalt, based on the 2020 Basalt Master Plan and Eagle County Climate Action Plan – Basalt Addendum share the following comments regarding the NEPA of the proposed conveyance of the USFS parcel located in El Jebel.

Density: The high-density residential development scenario referenced in the NEPA does not provide an accurate representation of current or future development options for the site. The estimate does not consider site planning constraints, community engagement, existing site conditions, utility capacity and roadway capacity. High-density development outside of the Town's urban growth boundary is not supported by the 2020 Basalt Master Plan. The Town of Basalt objects to the high-density number that is used in the NEPA for any additional calculations or planning efforts associated with this parcel.

Full Acreage: The NEPA discusses the possibility of holding acreage back from a future sale or lease and indicates that USFS desires to convey less than the total available 28 acres. The Town of Basalt objects to any conveyance that holds acreage back. The intention of both Pitkin and Eagle County is to develop the site to include three key uses: conservation, recreation, and low-density housing. Feedback provided during the Listening Sessions, conducted in the spring of 2021 from stakeholders and community members, clearly shows that these three uses strike an important balance for any future development of the site. USFS retaining any acreage would severely limit the counties ability to deliver a development that provides for conservation, recreational uses and low-density housing.

Additionally, previous approaches to a potential development that included both the upper and lower USFS owned parcels assumed that all of the lower parcel would be conserved. However, following the USFS decision to not include the lower parcel, all three components that were identified in the Listening Sessions (conservation, recreational use and low-density housing) must be accommodated on the upper parcel. This furthers both Pitkin and Eagle County assertions that USFS retaining any acreage would severely limit their ability to deliver a development that includes conservation, recreational use and low-density housing.

Water Rights: The NEPA describes that the water rights associated with the upper parcel may be conveyed with the land. The Town of Basalt supports both Pitkin and Eagle County in asking that the water rights be included in the conveyance and would object to the water rights being severed from the land in a

conveyance to the counties. The elimination of water rights not only limits future development potential but also reduces the likelihood of future conservation and recreational uses.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Michelle Bonfils Thibeault, Town Planner at Michelle.Thibeault@Basalt.net

Sincerely,



Ryan Mahoney, Town Manager