

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/7/2020 8:24:06 PM

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Comments: I will focus primarily on the Purpose and Need section of the EA. The "existing condition" section offers a reasonable description of Mission Ridge's current challenges. Certainly the shortage of beginner terrain, inadequate parking capacity, older chairlifts, cramped day lodge facilities, and a lack of suitable terrain for either snow play or nordic skiing, have placed the resort in a less than ideal situation for long-term success. Mission Ridge does have some advantages in comparison to both Stevens Pass and other Washington State resorts, competing for the large and growing Puget Sound market. Mission's less crowded runs, drier weather, and snow-making have significant appeal. However, there is no denying Mission Ridge needs significant upgrades, including expansion, for its long-term economic viability. Its past investment in snow-making was an enormous boost to the resort, but its expansion into section 19 could become nearly as important. Consequently, I support the general direction of the EA, including road construction across national forest land for access to private land, as well as lift and ski trail construction in section 30, also national forest land.

The issue of overnight accommodations is more complex and controversial. One can certainly make a case for the value on-site overnight accommodations can bring to a resort. I do not doubt it would strengthen Mission Ridge's long-term success. What concerns me is the very large scale of the village component Mission Ridge is proposing, at least at maximum build-out. While this is not directly addressed in the EA because the village is on private land, a village with a potential for over 900 living units would bring serious impacts: increased traffic through the Squilchuck Valley, large demand on meager water resources, etc. In my view a more modest village component offering less housing, would better match the character of the Purpose and Need argument. Other components of the section 19 village--parking, additional day lodge capacity, nordic and snow-play areas, beginner terrain--are vital.

One final comment: Near the end of the "desired condition" section, where ski resort viability is addressed, an overly gloomy picture of Mission Ridge's financial history is presented. Poor years have been experienced, but some seasons have brought measurable financial success. Exaggeration is not needed to justify expansion into section 19.