

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/4/2022 11:23:39 PM

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Organization:

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Comments: Subject: Taos Ski Valley Gondola and Other Improvements

There are many people, both locals (including me) and those visiting who access the trails to the Wheeler Peak/Williams Lake area from the current designated parking lot and the Kachina Base road. Currently this is a free activity but most likely there will be a fee for riding the proposed new gondola from the front base to the back side. Hikers and campers, if charged a fee (including me) will most likely continue to park where they have been these many past years thereby defeating the idea of decreased traffic congestion.

What impact will all of this expansion have on our existing environment (wildlife, soil, water flow, noise) in the proposed area and to the communities below? Grading the land for terminals, clearing for tower footings and the gondola/lifts corridors will all impact the environment that I love so dearly and have benefitted from for decades.

Is there an existing document supporting the claim that the new booster station, water tank and additional snowmaking pipe will not increase the current water uptake from the Rio Hondo? 5 Million gallons of water that would normally be flowing down river to those of us below to irrigate with and build up our aquifers and the greater Rio Grande will, if this gets approved, no longer be accessible.

The TSV is a relatively small area at the end of a canyon. How can adding 1200+ people an hour (due to the improved lifts and new gondola) in any way not create an impact on our environment? This would also impact the narrow Rte 150 that provides access to TSV. Arroyo Seco is already a dangerous place to ride a bike or walk due to the added trucks and traffic racing (yes, racing!) up 150. And traffic on the even narrower Rim Rd doubles, if not more, during the ski season rendering it yet another dangerous experience for locals and visitors alike. Pulling out of the ancillary roads/driveways on the Rim, much less walking or riding a bike there has been and will be even more so a life endangering experience. Will this expansion also include the added resources needed (County Rd maintenance, signs, speed control/mitigation)?

This whole proposal is a massive project that will most likely take years until completion although no timeline has been given. The impact and disruption on our environment (wildlife, soil, water, noise), not to mention on those of us who live nearby, will go on for years. This development is more for the benefit of visitors and for TSV itself than for locals who generally get priced out.

I urge you to reconsider this monumentally impactful and disruptive proposal for the sake of the environment and for those of us who would like to continue living peacefully therein.

Many thanks for the consideration,
Andrea Szekeres