

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/14/2023 4:23:05 PM

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Comments: Thank you to Sun Valley for continued replacement of aging infrastructure. After attending the the Library meeting and reading the comments on the public comment page, I offer my insights. For 37 years I have been a 100-day skier (average) on the slopes of Sun Valley, which pre-dates modern high-speed lift technology. It has been a pleasure to experience all the improvements on the mountain during that time. We have been very fortunate to have the Holding Family as the resort operator, with the vision and financing to make Sun Valley the #1 snowsport experience.

SEATTLE RIDGE

Seattle Ridge High-speed Quad replacement with High-speed 6-pack: I have mixed feelings about 6 person chairs in general, as they take away the intimacy of riding the chairs either solo, with a partner or a group. I have extensive experience at other resorts which have 6-packs as well as the 8-pack at Big Sky. Loading 8 people on a chair was least desirable, and thankfully we are not having this discussion.

While I do not approve of mixing my time on a lift ride with strangers which can interfere with the conversation of the group of friends, I also like the social aspect of meeting new people while riding the lifts. Note that more time is spent on the lift than on the ski run most of the time.

The age of the lifts requires upgrade of infrastructure. Modern chairlifts come with an extremely high price tag, and are an investment in the future. While some may state that we don't need the capacity right now, Sun Valley has to look at the future growth over the 35-year + useful lifespan of their investment.

As proposed, the lift will not be D-Line, so will operate at 5 meters/second vs 7 meters/second. This is fine, as the ride is short.

Pros:

Dependability of state-of-the-art equipment.

Lift line will decrease or become non-existent.

6-pack chair carriers can operate in more extreme wind situations.

Increase size of Ski Patrol building-- Yes, needed, especially with more riders on the slopes.

Cons:

Chair crowding of 6 people vs 4 people, which reduces intimacy of the experience, as well as integrates high skill level skiers with beginners. Offloading will become more of a "challenge" mixing skier/boarder types.

Ski Runs will become more saturated as capacity increases, without the ability to add new runs to spread out the skiers/riders, which will increase the opportunity for collisions, as well as decrease the fun factor by riding on more crowded runs.

Seattle Ridge Lodge will become overrun. This is already a problem on peak days, where there is a wait to enter and get a table.

>>>>The Seattle Ridge Lodge will need to be expanded as it is already at capacity.

My take: APPROVE.

CHRISTMAS CHONDOLA

The Christmas Chair is one of the original 3 Yan High-speed quad chairs. The natural progression is to replace oldest chairs first. The Christmas Chair is often under utilized, as mentioned by others in the public comments. However, in times of high traffic, there can be a lift line. This is especially true on a powder day, or when Lookout Express is down. (LOOKOUT EXPRESS IS THE DOWN MORE THAN ANY OTHER CHAIR AT SUN VALLEY AND SHOULD HAVE HIGHEST PRIORITY FOR REPLACEMENT).

Replace Christmas with a Chondola: The logistics of riding a Chondola is interesting, in that there are two lift lines for two loading points at the base terminal and a corresponding situation at the top terminal. I have no experience riding this newer type of lift but can use my experience of riding chairs and gondolas to have an opinion of the Mashup. The footprint of the terminals is greater, and the lower terminal will require building a retaining wall on the skier's left side of the terminal where the gondola loading platform will be. There will be two lift lines, one for the gondola, the other for the chair. The chair loading will be in the same orientation as the current Christmas Chair, as will be the unloading straight off at the top. The gondola cars will require a deck, to the rider's left, for gondola ingress/egress. The chairs are 6 place, and the gondola cars I believe are 10 passenger. The number of gondola cars is not stated, but may be one gondola alternating with 3? chairs. Sun Valley management has said there will be a different number of gondola cars for Summer vs Winter usage, with more in the Summer. I find this to be an odd idea. First of all, where will these extra gondola cars live in the Winter? Will there be an underground vault?? I think it is folly to suggest buying extra gondola cars (\$\$\$) and not have them on the haul rope at all times, except for WIND. Sun Valley management has told me the statistics of ridership at River Run, to point out that more people PREFER to ride the gondola vs the Lower River Chair. My response is that is because of where the lifts unload. The gondola leads directly to access Seattle Ridge via cat road. Lower River Run chair leads to either Lower River Run as the only downhill choice or the Lookout Express chairlift. There is often a big line at Lookout Express, (think crowds, combined with Lookout going down, which happens too often) so riding the Gondola/Christmas option often avoids a Lookout Express bottleneck. Thus, saying "people prefer riding gondolas" is patently false. Locals do not want to take off their skis for every lift ride. Refer to the comments during the comment period on the Challenger 6-pack project currently underway.

Pros:

The lift must be replaced as it is oldest Yan (Doppel-Yan) HS Chair.
Higher capacity is needed, especially when Lookout Express is down.
Chondola gives riders the option to ride out of the weather.
6-place chair gives riders option to keep their skis on for easy riding.

Cons:

Christmas lift is the most exposed lift on the mountain. Winds close it most big storms. Gondola cars are more prone to wind closure. 6-pack carriers (chairs) are far more wind stable.
Increased capacity of Christmas Lift will necessitate a discussion of Lookout Lodge replacement.
Foot passengers will not have an easy way to go from Gondola to Christmas gondola car in the Winter. NOT a seamless experience, such as Upper and Lower gondola at Mammoth, for example.
Question: Will there be a vault to remove ALL gondola cars on windy days?

My take: APPROVE

FOOTNOTE:

Since Earl Holding chose the current terminal location of the River Run Gondola, it is a compromise that made it difficult and much more expensive to mate it with a continuation lift to the top of the mountain. I recall a back-and-forth conversation that delayed construction before coming up with the ultimate top terminal location. At issue was/is the Roundhouse Restaurant and access from the gondola. A redo of the top terminal to integrate a stage 2 of a bottom to top gondola would be expensive, and create additional access issues to the Roundhouse. That could be solved with a covered escalator or elevator, yet another expensive and engineering challenge.

Constructing a bottom to top gondola would be my first choice, as opposed to a Christmas Chondola. That would really be a statement lift. As I understand it, Seattle Ridge lift project will be next, with Christmas project to follow later (the following year?). Plenty of time to engineer a 2-stage gondola. Sun Valley is #1...