

Proposed Zone Text Amendments to the Bridger Canyon Zoning District

April 24, 2014

1. Introduction

Bridger Bowl Ski Area is the owner of approximately 548 acres of land at the base of Bridger Bowl Ski area. The ski area has been in operation for the past 58 years. The lands are within the Bridger Canyon Zoning District and subject to the zone district regulations. An additional approximately 250 acres are owned by others within the zone district. The entire area has land uses and density assigned through the Zone District and previous planning efforts.

Bridger Bowl Ski Area proposes to amend the applicable zoning regulation and concurrently amend the Bridger Canyon General Plan and Development Guide and Bridger Bowl Base Area plan to reflect the acquisition of property by Bridger Bowl Ski Area, and amend the parking regulations relating to the ski area operations.

The proposed amendments would change the restriction of a 1,500 car parking area for ski area operations to add an additional up to 6 acres of parking. The final area of parking would include access routes, circulation and snow storage. Bridger Bowl would make provisions for reserving parking spaces for car-pools and encouraging transit. Visual quality and water quality strategies would also be included.

2. Purpose and Need for Amendments

The proposed amendments would bring the Bridger Canyon General Plan and Development Guide, the Bridger Bowl Base Area Plan (as incorporated in the General Plan) and the Bridger Canyon Zoning District up to date and clarify ski area parking and update ski area capacities.

3. Summary of Proposed Amendments

BRIDGER CANYON GENERAL PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE - GENERAL

The Bridger Canyon General Plan and Development Guide established the general standard for development in Bridger Canyon. It incorporates by reference the Bridger Bowl Base Area Plan.

The Bridger Canyon General Plan and Development Guide would be amended by reference to reflect the updated ski capacity calculations as identified in the Bridger Bowl Special Use Permit and Master Development Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement approved by the US Forest Service in 2005. This EIS evaluated the effects of a range of ski area expansion options. The selected Alternative would allow for a ski area

capacity of 6,100 skiers. References to greater ski area capacity in the General Plan and Development Guide would be updated to reflect the proposed capacity.

BRIDGER CANYON GENERAL PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE – RECREATION

Specific information regarding ski area capacity and parking at Bridger Bowl is put forth in this section of the General Plan beginning on page 30. Proposed Amendments are as follows:

The current 2014 ski area capacity of Bridger Bowl is 4,500 skiers at one time. The planned capacity at completion of the ski area master plan is 6,100 skiers at one time. As noted in the Bridger Master Plan documents and Forest Service EIS, skier at one time capacities will vary on peak snow days and holiday periods.

Bridger Bowl has completed parking lot expansions in the current parking areas to accommodate approximately 1,500 cars. Bridger Bowl continues to support bus transit operations from Bozeman, shuttle services from local hotels and bus service from school programs.

Bridger Bowl will be allowed to increase parking up to an additional 6 acres, including provisions for reserving parking for car-pool / high occupancy vehicles (defined as more than 2 persons per vehicle) during morning arrival period of 8 AM to 11 AM for up to 10% of the available parking spaces. This reserved area will be in the location that allows for the most expeditious access to skiing and the lodges.

Destination guests will be encouraged to utilize facilities in Bozeman until lodging is available in the Bridger Canyon Zoning District.

BRIDGER BOWL BASE AREA PLAN – GENERAL

As in the Bridger Canyon General Plan and Development Guide, the Bridger Bowl Base Area Plan would be amended by reference to the current ski area capacities and parking expansion. Other Goals and Objectives would remain the same.

BRIDGER BOWL BASE AREA PLAN - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (PAGES 6-8)

OBJECTIVE 1). Encourage the development of up to 1,500 parking spaces for Alpine day skiers. Provide for parking consistent with the other Goals and Objectives of General Plan and Base area plan sufficient for a ski area capacity of 6,100 skiers at one time.

BRIDGER CANYON ZONING REGULATION

The following amendments are proposed for the Bridger Canyon Zoning Regulation:

Section 10.10 (a) A 1,500 car parking lot shall be allowed in the Bridger Bowl Base Area. (a) Additional parking at a rate of 2.5 skiers per vehicle of calculated capacity up to a total of 6 acres (not including snow storage and access aisles) shall be permitted in addition to the existing parking areas for approximately 1,500 cars.

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4. Evaluation Criteria for Amendments to Zoning Regulations

General Criteria

a. How will the public interest be served if this application is approved?

Bridger Bowl Ski Area has provided winter recreation opportunities since 1955. The ski area operates as a non-profit entity focused on the local and regional market. Skier visits have increased as population in the local and regional market has increased. Consistent with the Bridger Bowl Mission Statement and Gallatin County land use regulations, Bridger Bowl has continued to make improvements to the ski area and support services including parking. The ski area continues to see growth in the ski and snowboard school programs serving over 20,000 participants in 2014 up from 13,000 in 2004, an approximately 57.6% increase. To continue to serve the local and regional markets additional parking is needed. Additional parking will reduce parking on peak days along the highway and access road, and allow for additional efforts toward car –pooling and high occupancy vehicle use.

b. What reasons prevent you from using this property for any of the uses allowed under the existing zoning?

The parking area at Bridger Bowl is currently limited by zoning and other approvals to 1,500 cars. Additional parking is required to meet demand. Bridger Bowl provides for transit service from the County Fairgrounds and strongly promotes car-pooling on websites and public information. Daily skier visits are highly dependent on new snow and day of the week or holidays. Demand on a daily basis and not readily predictable due to snow and wind conditions. The proximity of Bridger Bowl to the residents of Bozeman and surrounding areas make it attractive to drive to the ski area, especially during good snow conditions where waiting for busses and transit reduce opportunities for the desired ski experience.

While Bridger will continue to support and promote mass transit for employees and guests and heavily promote car-pooling, additional parking is needed. The previous assumptions regarding on-site lodging and skier visits derived from accommodations at the ski area have proved to be optimistic.

c. Why is there a need for the intended use of the property at this location?

As noted previously, skier visits and ski school programs continue to grow due to population increase, improvements in facilities and changes in the winter recreation marketplace. Previously alternative ski areas have combined and increased ticket prices making a non-profit entity such as Bridger Bowl more attractive. The relative proximity of Bozeman and

surrounding areas, a relatively dispersed population, both making personal vehicle use a desirable option, and lack of consistent demand for mass transit options make additional parking required at this location. Additional parking will make options of additional reserved parking options for car-pooling, high-occupancy vehicle and shuttles to be more attractive.

The demand for parking has increased uncontrolled parking along the highway. As skiers arrive and search for available parking options, traffic is slowed and turning movements increase congestion. It is possible that driving speeds on the highway are higher due to the anticipation of not finding parking.