



Request for Qualifications

Consulting Services: Analysis of Ski Resort Expansion Socio-economic Impacts

Teton County, Idaho is seeking a consultant to perform an analysis of cumulative socio-economic and infrastructure impacts resulting from ski area development at Wyoming's Grand Targhee Resort.

Background

The Grand Targhee ski and summer resort is located on the Caribou-Targhee National Forest in Teton County, Wyoming, just east of the state boundary with Idaho. Surrounded on three sides by federally designated wilderness and the rugged peaks of the iconic Teton Range, the resort's only road access is via Teton Valley, Idaho, which straddles the state line. Grand Targhee management has proposed transforming its base area, a 120-acre private inholding within the National Forest, into a major, self-contained destination resort, including real estate sales and significantly expanded commercial activity. They are also proposing a 35% increase to their Forest Service special-use permit area and a doubling of present skier capacity. Impacts on public services, transportation infrastructure, local labor supply and housing will fall largely on the communities within Teton County, Idaho, yet tax revenue from this development will flow exclusively to Wyoming.

This analysis is meant to supplement a NEPA Environmental Impact Statement study, currently in progress, that focuses on new resort development on Forest Service Lands. Grand Targhee's Master Development Plan proposes a number of new lifts, increased snow-making, new summer trails, extensive terrain modifications, two on-mountain restaurants, several small warming huts and expansion of the resort's operational boundaries.

The goal of the analysis for which we are hiring a consultant is to consider the cumulative impacts of development at the resort's privately owned base area--approved by Teton County, Wyoming in 2019--*in addition to* the proposed ski infrastructure improvements and expansion that fall under NEPA. These two components of resort development are co-dependent and heavily intertwined, but have fallen under the jurisdiction of separate agencies, one local and one Federal. For a truly comprehensive view of expansion impacts, resort development plans need to be studied in a more holistic manner.

Teton County, Idaho leadership had no meaningful input on the base-area development plan, and we are concerned by the combined scale and pace of development represented by these two sets of proposals. Local Idaho residents currently face skyrocketing real estate prices and severe housing and labor shortages. On top of these trends, our county government is facing daunting budgetary shortfalls. The Forest Service's EIS consultant, SE Group, has indicated that many of the issues the County is concerned

with may fall outside the scope of their NEPA study. We are requesting this supplementary analysis in case the upcoming Draft EIS understates local impacts from resort development. We will submit the results of this analysis to the Forest Service to augment their consultant's study, and use the findings to inform negotiations with Teton County, Wyoming and Grand Targhee Resort regarding impact mitigation strategies.

Scope of Work

The scope of this analysis will depend to some degree on the content of SE Group's socio-economic and traffic studies of the Draft EIS, as we wish to avoid duplication of their efforts. We anticipate receiving a largely complete draft of SE Group's socio-economic and traffic analysis by mid-August, 2021, at which point the scope required for this study can be defined more precisely.

This supplemental study must be completed prior to the publication of the Master Development Plan Draft EIS, so that its conclusions can be submitted during the subsequent 45-day comment period. The Forest Service currently estimates that the DEIS will be published in early January, 2022.

This analysis may include some or all of the following:

- 1) A summary of existing social and economic trends and stress factors relating to population growth, housing and public services. This would include examining state-of-Idaho-imposed restrictions on County property tax and budgeting, which limit the County's ability to fund services proportionate to rapid growth.
- 2) Social and economic effects of the proposed Grand Targhee expansion, including cumulative impacts of other, already approved development.

The analysis will focus on the following types of potential effects:

- Demand (and cost) for social services related to population growth and project-related demand (e.g. emergency medical services provided across state lines to the resort, Search & Rescue, solid waste disposal, etc.)
- Cost to Teton County, Idaho taxpayers for funding road infrastructure improvements required by resort growth and increased skier traffic.
- Labor market effects, including impacts on the size, cost, and stability of the local labor pool.
- Housing market effects, including impacts on housing stock and prices.
- Community mobility/access/travel time effects related to changes in resort parking (both on- and off-site), traffic levels and travel patterns in the area.
- Community population and community character shifts through displacement of long-time residents.
- Environmental justice effects on low-income and minority populations due to housing and labor market changes.

About Teton County

Teton County, Idaho is a rural community on the west slope of the Teton Range within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. It is the smallest county in Idaho at 451 square miles, encompassing the Teton Valley, a basin approximately 15 miles wide by 25 long. Lying at an elevation of between 6000 and 6,500

ft., the valley is home to three small incorporated towns: Victor, Driggs and Teton. Driggs, the county seat, is a 45-minute drive from Jackson, Wyoming, one-hour from Grand Teton National Park and 90-minutes from Idaho Falls, Idaho. The Valley floor consists mostly of agricultural operations and wetlands, and increasingly, suburban development. About a third of Teton County is public land, mostly National Forest. The current population includes approximately 12,000 residents, roughly 3,500 of which commute daily into Wyoming, mostly seeking higher wages in the Jackson area. About 1,200 workers commute from other east Idaho communities into Teton Valley to fill local labor demand. In the last year, median home prices have spiked by nearly 30%, largely driven by second-home buyers and out-of-state retirees seeking a relaxed lifestyle and access to public lands. The local economic base has evolved over recent decades from agriculture to real estate, homebuilding and tourism. That trend is only accelerating as Teton Valley gains a national reputation as an outdoor recreation mecca.

Proposal Submission and Due Date

Qualification proposals should be less than ten pages, and include:

- 1) A brief summary of their understanding of the project;
- 2) A resume detailing professional competence and experience in analysis related to this project;
- 3) References from previous projects;
- 4) A proposed timeline; and
- 5) An approximate fee proposal (the final scope and fee for services will be negotiated with the successful candidate).

Request for Qualifications publication date: July 8, 2021

Proposal submittals should be submitted and received no later than 5:00 PM, July 23, 2021.

Proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to:

Rob Marin

Teton County GIS Manager / Community Projects Coordinator

email address: rmarin@co.teton.id.us (ph. 208-354-2593 ext. 205)