



September 24, 2021

City of Steamboat
Planning & Community Development
124 10th Street
PO Box 775088
Steamboat Springs, CO 80477

Project: Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation – SSRC Wild Blue Gondola
Address: 2305 Mt. Werner Circle
Re: Development Plan, Variance & Conditional Use Narratives

To Whom It May Concern:

Please see the attached Development Plan, Variance and Conditional Use narratives for the proposed SSRC Wild Blue Gondola project. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'K. Leggett'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'K.' and the last name 'Leggett' clearly visible.

Kate Leggett
ESA Architects

Project Narrative

This project is the first leg of the Wild Blue Gondola. It includes a Lower Terminal and Mid-Station. Associated with the Lower Terminal is a snow melted queuing platform, mechanical space for the snow melt system, storage, and an operator cabin. The Mid-Station is made up of the terminal, operator cabin and steel platform system along with a Gondola Cabin Maintenance Building and a Sprung Structure for SnowSports School lunch service.

Water and sewer service is required for the Mid-Station Maintenance Building and Sprung Structure. These facilities fall within the out of district service agreement with Mount Werner Water. The domestic water and fire system are being designed by Wright Water Engineers and coordinated with Fire Prevention, USFS and Mount Werner Water directly.

Development Plan – Public Hearing

709.C Criteria for Approval

Development Plans shall be approved upon a finding that the following criteria are met:

1. The Development Plan is consistent with the character of the immediate vicinity or enhances or complements the mixture of uses, structures, and activities present in the immediate vicinity.

The proposed Wild Blue Gondola is to be part of the existing ski area operations. The terminal will have similar colors to the recently relocated Steamboat Gondola Lower Terminal. The gondola terminals at the base of the mountain have similar terminal enclosure roof styles and colors. They also incorporate similar queuing platforms created using a paver system that are snow melted. The secondary buildings at the Lower Terminal will have gray metal siding and corrugated metal roofs. These are to complement the buildings at Steamboat Gondola Lower Terminal.

The Wild Blue Gondola will enhance the activity at the base by providing the access to reach the new world class ski school facility which will be known as Greenhorn Ranch, located at the Mid-Station of Wild Blue. The gondola install allows for SnowSports School activities to be relocated out of the base area and move up the mountain to an area that is ideal for Terrain Base Learning™ (TBL) and allows for much more space for educational activities than at the base area. Wild Blue will also offer secondary access to the higher mountain terrain for guests with completion of its upper leg. This will significantly improve current out of the base area access to the upper mountain, reducing queuing times and line lengths that may interfere with skiers coming down the mountain in this same area.

The Mid-Station terminal is similar in shape and color to the other terminals on the mountain. The queuing platform will be made of a steel and have a steel and concrete support system similar to the gondola terminal. The Sprung structure is being relocated to this location from the Rendezvous Saddle area of the mountain to serve as a food venue for the SnowSports School. The one-story Sprung is white on the top portion (including the roof) and has a Mediterranean Olive Green base. This color pallet is complimentary to the mountain terrain where it will be located. The Cabin Maintenance Building will have a dark gray metal siding with accents provided in blue metal siding (to complement the lift terminal). The majority of the roofs will be flat with corrugated metal roof accents. The building is to correspond to its setting on the side of the mountain by stepping up from south to north, similar to the

slope of the grade it sits on. These structures at the Mid-Station all complement the ski area operations uses and activities including mountain access for guests, SnowSports School activities and maintaining the transport system to get to these functions.

2. The Development Plan will minimize any adverse impacts on the natural environment, including water quality, air quality, wildlife habitat, vegetation, wetlands, and natural landforms.

The proposed Wild Blue Gondola Lower Terminal limits its footprint to what is required to allow for terminal access and the functions a terminal requires to run efficiently. The terminal and platform area have been limited to minimize impacts on the natural surroundings. Drainage and water quality requirements will be designed as required by applicable codes. The area around the new platform is not currently in wetlands and re-vegetation will be provided around the new terminal to match the existing natural terrain.

The proposed Wild Blue Gondola Mid-Station, Cabin Maintenance Building and SnowSports School Sprung Structure will limit their footprint to what is required to allow for access and functions required for the facility to run efficiently. The location for the Mid-Station was chosen to limit the disturbance the gondola will create along the mountain and to provide appropriate access to the TBL terrain. The structures are kept up above a wetland area that exists in the Bashor Basin area. It is the most efficient access line from the base and minimizes impact on wildlife, vegetation, and natural landforms.

3. The Development Plan provides adequate vehicular access, considering grade, width, and capacity of adjacent streets and intersections; parking; loading, unloading, refuse management, and other service areas; pedestrian facilities; and public or private transportation facilities.

The proposed lower leg of Wild Blue Gondola will be utilized to relocate several existing skier service functions further up the mountain (SnowSports School lessons and SnowSports School lunch service). This will significantly improve the out of base accessibility to the upper mountain areas for all guests.

Traffic/Transportation Facilities - Please see Comprehensive Transportation Impact Analysis Steamboat Resort Master Development Plan Amendment dated September 16, 2021 and the Traffic Memorandum Letter dated September 24, 2021, both completed by McDowell Engineering for information on traffic impact.

Parking - Two Forest Service Studies completed in the last three years confirm that parking is adequate for the proposed Wild Blue Gondola Project. The totality of the proposed on-mountain improvements was studied both in the Environmental Assessment (EA) completed in 2021 (Record Decision August 9, 2021) and in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) completed in 2018.

USDA Forest Service, Steamboat Resort Improvements Project and Project-Specific Forest Plan Amendment Environmental Assessment. April 2021. Record Decision August 9, 2021.
Page 5, Table 2.

“Traffic and Parking

The proposed action would likely create a small increase in annual visitation which would generate additional, but negligible, vehicular traffic on roadways. Parking resources would not be meaningfully

impacted by the proposed action. These impacts are anticipated to be minor and within the effects disclosed in the 2018 FEIS/ROD.”

USDA Forest Service, Steamboat Ski Resort Final Environmental Impact Statement. May 2018

Page 142

“Parking Impacts

There would be no changes to the current parking lot configuration at Steamboat. There is adequate parking capacity for the projected visitation that is expected to occur as a result of the proposed projects included in the Proposed Action Alternative.

Page 143

“The existing parking capacity can accommodate the projected number of private automobiles for a winter weekend day (10th busiest); therefore, parking on a median winter day and a typical summer weekend day, both of which result in less visitor trips than a winter weekend day (10th busiest), would also be accommodated by the existing parking configuration at Steamboat.”

Service/Refuse Management - The supply and refuse on-mountain will vary slightly from existing with the addition of the SnowSports School Facility, in that it is relocated from the Base Area. Supply and refuse will be delivered and removed from the SnowSports School Facility via a snowcat and will be coordinated with the existing refuse facilities and provider to integrate it in the overall system. Coordination on pick-up will be via the existing trash hauling company and coordinated with existing facilities on the mountain and off.

4. The Development Plan complies with all applicable requirements of this CDC.

SEE SECTIONS LISTED UNDER ARTICLE 4 BELOW.

5. The Development Plan is in substantial conformance with an approved Conceptual Development Plan, if applicable.

Not Applicable

Article 4

Section 401 Waterbody Setbacks

Table 401-1 Waterbody Setbacks

Burgess Creek Base Area Lots	12’ min setback from Ordinary high-water mark
------------------------------	---

The proposed Wild Blue Gondola Lower Terminal and platform location is 12’ min from the Ordinary high-water mark for Burgess Creek as required.

Table 401-1 Waterbody Setbacks

Tributary streams, intermittent

Streams and natural drainage	30’ min setback from Centerline of water course
------------------------------	---

The proposed Wild Blue Gondola Mid-Station Terminal, Sprung, Maintenance Building and platform are outside the 30' waterbody setback from the water course located south of the development as required.

Section 404 Revegetation

Ensure prompt revegetation of areas disturbed by development to prevent runoff and create an attractive appearance.

The existing site vegetation will be maintained to the greatest extent possible around both the Lower Terminal and Mid-Station. The site work for the project will minimize disturbances. Any disturbed area will be revegetated within one year of the disturbance or by the next growing/planting season after completion of the development, whichever is sooner. The re-vegetation will match the existing ski mountain vegetation plan and will incorporate Storm Water BMPs.

Section 405 Exterior Lighting

Permit reasonable use of lighting for safety, utility, security, productivity, enjoyment and commerce. Minimize light pollution, light trespass and glare.

Please see lighting plans.

Section 409 Snow Storage

Ensure there are adequate areas for storing accumulated snowfall until it melts.

The proposed Wild Blue Gondola Lower Terminal includes a snow melted platform around the terminal for guest access. The Wild Blue Gondola Mid-Station has a walking platform around it made of steel bar grate to allow snow to flow through it. All other snow accumulation and storage around the proposed gondola stations is required and encouraged for the outdoor recreation use of the ski resort facility. No public streets or sidewalks are affected.

Section 411 Technical Specifications

Ensure development complies with proper engineering standards to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

Drainage – Drainage drawings and a report are included.

Streets and Circulation – A comprehensive traffic study and memo specific to Wild Blue Gondola is included.

Fire Prevention – No structures shall be erected in advance of adequate fire precautions. Discussion have been and continue to be coordinated directly with the Fire Marshal and Mount Werner Water.

Geological Hazards – No geological hazards will be required to be mitigated or be created by this project.

Section 413 Phasing

Ensure that development occurs in an efficient and orderly manner with consideration of the importance of certain improvements to the community and the project itself.

The Wild Blue Gondola Lower Terminal, Mid-Station, Cabin Maintenance Building and Sprung are currently planned to be completed on one phase of construction work.

April 2022 – November 2022.

719.B (2)(b) Major Variance

Variance shall be reviewed through the Major Variance process when proposed application type or variation do not meet the applicability of a Minor Variance.

Variance Request

A height variance request is being asked for at the Cabin Maintenance Building located adjacent to the Wild Blue Gondola Mid-Station. This Cabin Maintenance Building is used to regularly inspect, maintain, and repair any damage to the gondola cabins. This regular maintenance of the gondola cabins and their grips (what attaches the cabin to the gondola line) is required by the Colorado Passenger Tramway Safety Board for the safety of the gondola and all passengers.

To maintain gondola cabins, they must be taken off the main gondola cable and transported into a maintenance facility so they can be inspected and repaired as necessary. The gondola cabins come off the cable at the same height as the terminal station. They enter the Cabin Maintenance Building by riding on a rail system provided by the lift manufacturer. This rail system transports the cabins into the building at the terminal enclosure height where they immediately go down a “cabin elevator” which is a rail on a slope that will take them a story below the terminal. An important part of the repair and maintenance on a gondola cabin is on what is called the “grip”. This is the attachment point of the cabin to the gondola cable. It is located on the top of the cabin. To access it, the cabins must come down to a level below the staff so they can inspect and maintain the grips.

The height that the cabins exit the terminal is a given height; set by the terminal itself. The clearances for the gondola cabin elevator, maintenance bays, grip access locations and washing stations are all set by the size and height of the cabins and the rail system to move the cabins into and out of the building which is provided by the lift manufacturer. The heights required at the building are set by the equipment being maintained and the use of this building.

The increase in height for this facility is being requested due to the function of this building and its integral height relationship with the Gondola Terminal, which is under the jurisdiction of the Colorado Tramway Board. The requested height variance is for the building located on the south side of the terminal which is out of directly sight lines of adjacent properties and largely shielded visually from them by the terminal itself.

Building Form - Building Height - Outdoor Recreational Uses

	<u>Existing Requirement</u>	<u>Proposed Requirement</u>
Overall Height	34' max	38' max
Average Plate Height	22' max	28' max

719.D General Criteria for Approval

1. The Variance will not injure or adversely impact legal conforming uses of adjacent property, or the applicant has accurately assessed the impacts of the proposed Variance and has agreed to mitigate those impacts.

The height of the Gondola Cabin Maintenance Building will not injure or adversely impact the adjacent properties. This Maintenance building is located to the south of the Wild Blue Gondola Terminal. It will be partially built into the side of the existing mountain adjacent to the Terminal. The closest neighbors of this property are approximately 650 feet to the north. The Gondola Terminal itself visually shields the Maintenance Building from these adjacent properties to the north.

2. The Variance is compatible with the preferred direction and policies outlined in the Community Plan and other applicable adopted plans.

The subject property is zoned OR – Open Space and Recreation. The current and proposed land use (ski area) aligns with the OR zone district purpose. Per CDC Section 201.A:

“This zone district accommodates recreation uses, such as parks, athletic fields, ski areas, and community gathering spaces...”

Both the Community Development Plan and the Community Plan are relatively silent to land use and related regulations associated with the Ski Area. Chapter 1 of the Community Plan introduces the formation and development of “one of the world’s premier winter resorts”. The remaining references are generally focused upon the base area development, although Goal SPA-2 says, “Our community will continue to promote the Mountain Area as the focal point for tourism activity.”

Supporting this variance request will significantly promote the goals of the Community Plan documents by allowing these on-mountain improvements to the Mountain Area. Supporting this facility as a premier winter resort and a focal point for tourism activity for Steamboat Springs.

3. The Variance application meets either the criteria for unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty, as applicable, or the criteria for an acceptable alternative:
 - b. Acceptable Alternative: The proposed development provides at least one of the following acceptable alternatives to the standard:
 - i. The alternative achieves a result that is equal to or better than the code standard to which a variance is being sought; or
 - ii. **The purpose and intent of the code standard will not be achieved by strict application of the standard in the particular circumstance; or**
 - iii. The application of other code standards, purposes, or intents will be improved by varying the standard.

The purpose and intent of the OR Zone District is, “to provide areas for public or private recreational uses, open space preservation, and other similar uses”.

Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation’s (SSRC) goal is to improve the overall operation and experience for summer and winter users, including to provide new facilities for beginner skiers and riders. The Wild Blue Gondola is to provide the transportation to this new beginner skier and rider facility (SnowSports). The effort SSRC is making has already been supported by the City of Steamboat Springs community as evident in the approved Development Plan applications for the relocation of the current Steamboat Gondola Lower Terminal, improved pedestrian access at the base area and gathering spaces at Gondola Plaza.

The Gondola Maintenance Building facilitates and enhances the recreational use by allowing for the function of the gondola itself to be maintained for a long lifespan. The increase in height for this facility is being requested due to the function of this building and its integral height relationship with the Gondola Terminal, which is under the jurisdiction of the Colorado Tramway Board.

Conditional Use

707.C Criteria for Approval

Conditional Uses shall be approved upon a finding that the following criteria are met:

1. The proposed use is compatible with the preferred direction and policies outlined in the Community Plan and other applicable adopted plans.

The subject property is zoned OR – Open Space and Recreation. The current and proposed land use (ski area) aligns with the OR zone district purpose. Per CDC Section 201.A:

“This zone district accommodates recreation uses, such as parks, athletic fields, ski areas, and community gathering spaces...”

Both the Community Development Plan and the Community Plan are relatively silent to land use and related regulations associated with the Ski Area. Chapter 1 of the Community Plan introduces the formation and development of “one of the world’s premier winter resorts”. The remaining references are generally focused upon the base area development, although Goal SPA-2 says, “Our community will continue to promote the Mountain Area as the focal point for tourism activity.”

The facility being proposed as part of this project is a ski gondola to enhance the ski area function already in place. The proposed use of the Wild Blue Gondola is compatible with the existing use at this property and the Community Plan.

2. The proposed use is consistent with the purpose of the zone district,

The subject property is zoned OR – Open Space and Recreation. The current and proposed land use (ski area) aligns with the OR zone district purpose. Per CDC Section 201.A:

“This zone district accommodates recreation uses, such as parks, athletic fields, ski areas, and community gathering spaces...”

The facility being proposed as part of this project is a ski gondola to enhance the ski area function already in place. It will also provide access to the new world class SnowSports School facility to be located at Greenhorn Ranch. It is consistent with the purposes of the OR Zone District and will promote recreation uses at the ski area.

- 3. The proposed use will mitigate any negative impacts to surrounding properties and the community, considering factors such as hours of operation and the potential for off-site impacts such as odors, noise, smoke, dust, glare, vibrations, shadows, and visual impacts.**

The proposed use of the Wild Blue Gondola is compatible with the existing uses on the ski mountain. The existing Preview Lift will be removed to accommodate the Wild Blue Gondola. The proposed project will relocate current SnowSports School functions to a more appropriate on-mountain area, which is already being used for this purpose. This will significantly improve the congested base area by relocating these important uses to a more appropriate mountain environment. The guests learning to ski & snowboard will now have a more ample space to become the future of the sport and its longevity. The base area guest will now have additional options for moving through and up to the terrain. Reducing congestion and providing for a better experience for guests and locals alike.

4. Compliance with all applicable requirements of CDC

The Development Plan complies with all applicable requirements of this CDC.
SEE SECTIONS LISTED UNDER ARTICLE 4 UNDER THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN ABOVE.