

**From:** [John Tedeschi](#)  
**To:** [DNCR: Mt Washington Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Comments and thoughts to Draft Master Plan  
**Date:** Thursday, August 25, 2022 9:14:48 AM

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Dear Commission member,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments about the use of Mt Washington and the Master Plan.

I live in Bartlett and regularly enjoy the activities on Mt Washington whether hiking, ice climbing, skiing, snow shoeing, driving visitors up the road way etc. I am a retired actuary with 40 years experience identifying and managing catastrophic risks. More recently, I a member of the Bartlett Fire and Rescue department as well as the Bartlett-Jackson Ambulance as an EMT. With this as background here are my thoughts.

The environment of the summit is beautiful, alluring, harsh and dangerous, many of the visitors that arrive by cog railroad and autoroad are not prepared for the summit. I have seen many guests (especially railroad riders) who desperately seek shelter in the Sherman Building to get out of the weather. My point is that most visitors are not prepared. Hikers are encouraged to have the 10 essentials, similarly, guests of the auto road and railroad should be encouraged to be prepared in order to reduce the dependency of the Sherman Building for shelter.

The proposal of the Cog Railway to offer hotel space is ludicrous and has many serious flaws. Here are a few.

- I suspect the nightly cost of staying at the hotel will be very high, I do not think the area will attract individuals who can afford a high nightly cost. If the hotel expansion is not financially sound, who is responsible for dismantling the construction and who assumes that cost. The Commission should impose any partner within the summit area to post bonds, a good example is what happens to the hotel buildings if the Cog Railway goes into financial failure. Pleas remember that numerous multi-billion dollar firms have gone bust - Lehman Brothers in an example. The state should require each partner to have an evergreen bond established for the amount required to undo any construction previously provided. In the case of the Cog Railway proposal, they should be required to maintain a bond to dismantle and remove any construction that was part of this expansion and return area to original conditions. The bond should also be triggerable if the Cog Railway no longer properly maintains the new construction. It would be the discretion of the state to call such a bond and take over control of the proposed area.
- It is easy to foresee an increase in search and rescues with overnight visitors who venture out to enjoy sunset or sunrise and get caught in the elements and are physically not prepared for the harsh environment. If the Cog Railway proposal is approved, then they should be required to staff suitable first responders to handle any search and rescue associated with their guests. The local volunteer agencies should not have to take on that additional burden and the state should not have to incur that additional cost, including helicopter resources. As a search and rescue person, I have seen the stupidity

of what goes wrong out there, whether due to intoxication, drugs, physical condition, poorly prepared, etc. The Cog Railway will make a meaningful profit with this proposal, but not necessarily assuming all the costs with running the operation.

- The recent car fire at the summit should be a very realistic reminder to the commission about how challenging it is to manage a fire incident at the summit. The more buildings and attractions that are added, the risks increase. Adding over a dozen rail cars to be used by the public drastically increases fire risk. The fire risk has knock on effects of conflagration to surrounding structures and hazardous waste that would radically destroy a fragile environment.
- As an add-on to the above point, the commission should also consider the evacuation impact for a large scale incident, especially during inclement weather.
- The Cog Railway does not have a stellar reputation of environmental impact and has disregard for its impact on mother nature. Take a ride on the rail and notice the massive amount of debris along the railway, whether construction debris, railroad ties, etc. The smell of creosote is pungent. If they historically have not cared for mother nature, what makes the commission think that the proposed hotel area will be any better.
- Medical emergencies. Similar to fire incidents, a hotel near the summit would make medical emergencies very difficult to manage. Would the Cog Railway be able to deploy a rail car in the middle of the night or could an ambulance be available to access the hotel? Would Fish and Game have jurisdiction? If so, why should state incur such costs for a private organization? The commission should consider how long it would take to have medical personnel get deployed and reach the hotel area during off hours and in inclement weather. It is incumbent on the commission to set guidelines and impose requirements that deal with life safety, regardless of the ownership of the structure at the summit. This is more important for profit making private entities, like the Cog Railway, who likely would not be incurring the costs of rescues. You could argue that an injured hiker can require massive resources and costs to extricate, but no one is financially benefiting for the hiker being out there.
- Visitors to the hotel will roam around the facility which will cause more unplanned trails to be created which will destroy the landscape. Guests will more than likely do this for sunrise and sunset times to enjoy the scenery, unless this is controlled by the hotel then damage will ensue.
- I do not have access to the rights granted the Cog Railway, but a railway is not a hotel. While entities like Amtrak have sleeper cars, these are not hotels. I do not see how a Railway should have hotels

I do offer a suggestion to the Cog Railway as a way to make additional money without having to make any investment and risk ruining nature high on the mountain. They can offer sunrise and sunset trips up the mountain and charge a much higher fee for these excursions. The Cog Railway staff would be responsible for managing the visitors during these special trips.

I believe that while the Cog Railway has been granted rights in the past, we should learn from our mistakes. With the benefit of today's thinking and realization that we learn from our mistakes, we should be restricting rights that might have been previously granted. Take for example the numerous confederate monuments that have been dismantled because of more modern thinking. Let's not get stuck in outdated thinking. The world is going through massive global change with little understanding of the future impact. Why would we think it is a good long-term benefit to have a hotel near the summit of Mt Washington, other than for profit reasons? As stewards of the summit of Mt Washington, please think of the long

term impact of the Cog Railway proposal. Please vote it down.

If any of these points require clarification, i would be happy to discuss further or expand on the topic.

Thanks you

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