



Frisco Peninsula Recreation Area | Frisco Adventure Park

Potential Planning Elements Evaluation

JANUARY 2016



Introduction

At the request of the Town of Frisco, SE Group has facilitated and engaged in several planning discussions regarding the appropriate future of the Peninsula Recreation Area (PRA) including the Frisco Adventure Park (FAP). This process began with conversations to define the character and nature of the PRA and assist the Town Council in portraying what the future may look like. A summary of key direction provided by the Town Council included the following:

- The PRA and Marina define Frisco as a unique mountain town.
- Activities and features in the PRA should maintain character with the mountain environment.
- Future plans for the PRA should avoid the evolution into a commercial character “fun park.”
- The Town is committed to primarily providing amenities for local community members but recognizes the opportunities presented by the tremendous levels of visitors Summit County receives.
- Ideally, facilities would be a blend of revenue and non-revenue to produce an aggregate break-even for the area as a whole.
- Council prefers to save for new amenities, or fund them internally, as opposed to borrowing or bonding funds. This element represents prudent fiscal management, but may limit the opportunities which can be developed.
- There is interest in diversifying the FAP so that it is not perceived as “just a tubing hill.”
- The “role” of the PRA is centered upon community recreation, health and fitness.
- Projects which may enhance continuity between the PRA and the main areas of town are optimal.

Based on these discussions and general guidance, multiple ideas and potential opportunities were considered, with nine concepts selected for evaluation in greater detail.

Natural Play

Opportunity

- “Natural Play” features plants, logs, water, sand, mud, boulders, hills, and trees which build a connection with the environment and allow play to occur.
- These park features are far more natural and in keeping with the natural surroundings of the PRA. They additionally represent a unique alternative to “playing on plastic” which children of all ages find distinctive from other “playgrounds” they have experienced.

Planning Considerations

- Depending on size and budget, this could represent/occupy an area from 0.25 to 0.5 of an acre.
- Approximate costs for these areas are \$100,000 for a 0.5-acre site. There are substantial opportunities to use on-site and local materials.
- As a component of a natural feature play area, a youth-scale challenge course may be of interest. These are essentially a scaled-down version of an adult challenge course and are correspondingly less expensive to develop. Typical capital cost for these would be on the order of \$100,000. Areas providing these (Utah Olympic Park) charge \$20 per user. This could operate as a stand-alone amenity and become an added activity to the Kids Camp offering.
- Outdoor bouldering could be an added feature of this area. Free-standing boulders are approximately \$25,000 for the structure. It should be noted that unless you have accomplished climbers periodically setting routes these end up being play features rather than an actual climbing opportunity.



Pavilion

Opportunity

- The existing Day Lodge is approximately 4,000 square feet and has an occupant capacity of 120 persons. It is primarily an all indoor facility (including the restrooms) and is therefore staffed while open. Frisco has had good success in renting this facility for groups and weddings. Outside alcohol is not permitted as Frisco holds the liquor license—this element adds measurable expense to booking groups and is somewhat restrictive to utilization of the facility.
- The existing Day Lodge does provide toilet facilities but only when the lodge is open and staffed. It would be desirable to have toilets available during non-staffed hours and to provide separate toilets, the use of which would not interrupt functions booked in the Day Lodge.
- There exists an opportunity for a more casual pavilion/shelter facility at the Frisco PRA. This could be very similar to Breckenridge’s Carter Park Pavilion which provides a simple indoor space (heated), basic kitchen, outdoor deck/table area with large gas grill.
- Dissimilar to the facility at Walter Byron Park, the pavilion should provide a reasonable amount of indoor heated space given the variable and cool summer temperatures Summit County experiences. This will additionally allow for winter use of the venue.
- The Carter Park Pavilion is available for a six-hour block (\$400) or the whole day (\$750). Residents of the Town of Breckenridge pay half rate. Specific financial data for the Carter Park pavilion were not available. However, discussions with the Town of Breckenridge indicate that their pavilion is booked roughly three days per week in the summer months and one to two days per week in the winter. Some rough calculations indicate that Breckenridge is likely capturing on the order of \$45,000 per year in Carter Park pavilion rental fees. The bulk of this would be realized as net income as the expenses are limited to maintenance and light janitorial.

Planning Considerations

- Construction costs for a pavilion at the PRA are likely to run approximately \$200 per square foot.¹ A facility of roughly 3,000 square feet would be on the order of \$600,000.
- The programming of the pavilion space could additionally provide a general picnic/use area for the community which would not require advanced reservation.
- It was noted that this facility might also be utilized as the winter sleigh ride reception.
- Expenses for the facility would be limited to maintenance and simple janitorial. Each user group would be required to post a damage/cleaning deposit which is forfeited if the facility is not left in proper condition.
- Using the net income approximation for the Carter Park pavilion as an indicator, it would appear that the capital expenditure for a PRA pavilion may require on the order of 13 to 15 years to begin providing a financial return.



¹ Data courtesy of local contractor “Mathison Custom Builders.”

Summer Tubing

Opportunity

- Frisco enjoys one of the most successful winter tubing operations in the nation, hosting approximately 65,000 guests with revenue of roughly \$1.3M and a net per guest capture of over \$21.
- The Frisco Adventure Park (FAP) tubing hill has superb proximity and visibility to guests/motorists year-round.
- Nationally, several facilities have augmented their tubing hills to allow summer tubing. This is typically accomplished by installing a summer tubing surface which allows the tubes to slide well.
- In the past five years a number of synthetic materials have appeared in the marketplace, as an alternative “summer” surface for this popular activity.
- Summer tubing utilizes the same tubes as the winter counterpart, with the addition of a hard surface bottom that allows better movement on the synthetic surface and an inner foam seat to protect the rider from the heat generated by the tube. The surface lift used for winter tubing may also be utilized in the summer.



Summer Tubing

Planning Considerations

- Neveplast has created a summer tubing system called “Tubby,” which utilizes a synthetic surface. Tubby is typically installed and removed for summer use only, and has been designed for a simple, quick laying and assembly. This product would be very well suited to the Frisco Adventure Park.
- The approximate cost of the Neveplast Tubby product is \$108 per linear foot. Assuming the Frisco lanes are roughly 800 feet long (the lift is 600 feet) and **four** lanes were targeted, the capital cost would be \$345,000. There is also opportunity to “test” this activity by initially deploying fewer than four lanes; although, the critical mass of the venue is important to its ultimate success.
- The lanes could be installed each spring by a crew in two to three days, removed and stored in roughly half that time.
- Using the winter visitation rate of roughly 11,000 guests per month, the Frisco tubing operation could generally expect to capture an additional 33,000 guests in the summer (assume half of June, all of July and August, plus weekends in September).
- Using the winter revenue rate of \$21 per guest, this equated to approximately \$693,000 in added facility revenue.
- Presently, the winter tubing is operating at roughly a 52% profit margin. Applying this to the summer tubing concept, one might anticipate an additional \$360,000 in profitability per summer.²
- As depicted, the project would provide a return on investment (ROI) in the first summer.
- The visitation estimation for summer is likely quite conservative in that the summer season is now significantly busier in Frisco/Summit County than winter.
- Summer tubing at the FPA could be initiated with only two tubing lanes for half the initial investment to determine popularity of the activity.
- The Colorado Adventure Park in Fraser, CO presently provides summer tubing with an open tubing surface roughly 600 feet in length (200 feet shorter than the FPA).



² Based on data provided in the 2014 financials. Expenses are inclusive of current debt service but exclusive of any future debt service which may or may not be incurred for this or other projects.

Skatepark Rebuild

Opportunity

- The Frisco Skate Park is a popular amenity that has served its time well. It is no longer fresh or attractive to its users or to the FPA as a whole.
- As a general rule, there are no opportunities to monetize skateparks. They are simply an added amenity provided for the community. However, the Frisco Skate Park does offer an added amenity for the Frisco Fun Club Day Camp Program. A new skatepark would add to the attractiveness of the Day Camp program.
- The existing facility is approximately 10,000 square feet in size and is comprised of all above-grade features.
- Modern skateparks are typically 8,000 to 12,000 square feet in size and are a cast-in-place, in-ground design.
- The skateparks in Breckenridge and Silverthorne are approximately 18,000 and 13,000 square feet, respectively.

Planning Considerations

- With two other modern parks already existing in Summit County, there remains the question of how much skatepark space is appropriate for the local user demographic.
- Within the June 2015 *Town of Frisco Community Survey*, only 7% of respondents reported utilizing the existing skatepark. Within this same survey, 14% placed an “Important or Extremely Important” value on an “Expanded Skatepark.”
- For a small community of skaters, the size of the existing facility is likely about right.
- Approximate cost for an in-ground, cast-in-place park is \$32 per square foot. A new park at the FPA would therefore be on the order of \$320,000.³
- Concrete cast parks are low maintenance and vandal resistant.



³ Data supplied by Dreamland SkateParks (Lincoln City, OR).

Community Sport Court

Opportunity

- Outdoor multi-purpose sport courts are an increasingly common community attribute.
- A modern design multi-sport court is capable of hosting:
 - » Basketball
 - » Volleyball
 - » Futsal & Soccer
 - » In-line Hockey
 - » Shuffleboard
 - » Paddle Tennis + Pickleball
 - » Four Square
 - » Badminton
 - » Skateboarding
 - » Speedmitton
 - » Rebounder Ball Training
 - » Short Tennis Court
- Sport courts provide safety benefits when compared to traditional asphalt, concrete, or hardwood courts. The softer foam results in the body absorbing a fraction of the shock sustained on traditional concrete, making it easier on joints and muscles, while also protecting users from sustaining head injuries.

Planning Considerations

- A full size basketball court requires a space roughly 50' x 95' (4,750 square feet)
- A multi-sport court capable of accommodating numerous activities can be as large as 60' x 120' (7,200 square feet)
- Pricing for a full complement multi-sport court is on the order of \$5 per square foot. Therefore, the full size court would be in the range of \$36,000.⁴



⁴ Data supplied by Sport Court of the Rockies

Disc Golf

Opportunity

- The Peak One Disc Golf Course is quite popular and provides 18 holes in an ideal setting.
- Within the June 2015 *Town of Frisco Community Survey*, 15% of respondents reported utilizing the existing disc golf course. Within this same survey, 16% placed an “Important or Extremely Important” value on an “Expanded Disc Golf Course.”
- As with other amenities of this nature, there is not any opportunity to monetize the existing or future expanded facility.
- The Peak One Disc Golf Course is the only course in Summit County recognized by the Professional Disc Golf Association.
- The Town of Dillon now provides an 18-hole course on Tenderfoot Mountain, which has a good reputation.
- Copper Mountain Resort’s disc golf course has been interrupted by various construction projects and is reportedly unplayable at present.
- Arapahoe Basin Ski Area installed three test holes in August 2015.

Planning Considerations

- Depending on the land clearing which might be required as the fairways are located/developed, the basic cost of a disc golf course involves the preparation of tee boxes, the installation of disc-catcher baskets, and proper signage. Typically, 18 holes can be developed for approximately \$5,000 to \$6,000.
- The U.S. Forest Service presently works under legislation and agency policy which clarifies that disc golf is a permissible activity on National Forest System lands. Therefore, portions of the additional disc golf might be pursued on National Forest within the PRA.



Nordic Center Enhancement

Opportunity

- It is recognized that the Frisco Nordic Center has potential to play a more significant role within the community—not only for those engaged in Nordic skiing, but for other community use groups.
- Nationwide, Nordic skiing is experiencing approximately 2% per year growth—this is contrasted to the Alpine skiing market which has been flat (at best) or slightly negative for a decade.
- There are presently believed to be approximately 4.1 to 4.3 million Nordic participants nationwide. This value compares to the 10 to 14 million Alpine skiing participants nationwide.
- Given the close proximity of the Frisco Nordic Center, and the capabilities of the venue, the PRA could play a more significant role in providing training and facilities for masters, Alpine teams, cross training, the Summit Nordic Club, and summer mountain bike events.
- Pursuit of this opportunity may potentially involve development of a “club house” type facility which would accommodate teams, training, and staging.

Planning Considerations

- At an elemental basis, this opportunity could be pursued via amplified marketing and event promotion with little capital expense.
- The potential to ultimately develop a “club house” would likely be sought in conjunction with one or more local athletic teams.



Early Season Nordic Training/ Event Venue

Opportunity

- Presently West Yellowstone, MT is the go-to venue for early-season Nordic training and racing.
- With Frisco's Nordic Center located at 9,100 feet elevation, there could be a strategic opportunity to be the best early-season, low-snow condition, training and event venue in the Nation. Presently, Alpine teams come from all over the Nation, and around the world, to train at Copper Mountain Resort in the early season.
- The Nordic Center/Town would benefit by renting early-season training/venue space (hill-space) and potentially hosting an early-season event.
- The majority of the financial benefit of this opportunity would be realized via indirect spending within the Town as teams and supporting coaches/families visit Frisco (lodging, restaurant, etc.).

West Yellowstone, MT hosts the "Ski Festival" each year over Thanksgiving week. This is the "go-to" early season Nordic event. National teams, collegiate teams and competitors come from around the country (+/-3,500 participants). The Festival additionally includes a Nordic hard/soft goods tradeshow with all the major suppliers attending. While West Yellowstone is not a convenient destination, or particularly well appointed, it will be very difficult to cut into this event as the early season destination. Frisco would need to offer 15 km of quality Nordic skiing by November 10th at the latest to contend in as an early season venue.

Planning Considerations

- Frisco's snowmaking system presently uses five fan guns to process up to 30 acre feet of water (+/-60 acre feet of snow). The current throughput is 650 GPM using one pump.
- Approximately 20 acre feet of the snowmaking is allocated to the tubing operation with +/- 4 to 5 acre feet of water being made into snow for Nordic.

- The 5 acre feet of water allocated to Nordic presently has the ability to cover roughly 10 acres of surface area with machine produced snow, 1 foot deep.
- The majority of this is used to develop milling and teaching areas around the Nordic lodge with very little being applied to linear Nordic trails. Presently the reach of the snowmaking system is limited in distance and the operations staff use front loaders to bucket snow to areas out along the trails.
- With an average trail width of 12 feet and a design snow depth of 12 inches on a Nordic trail, each acre foot of water could cover roughly 7,200 linear feet of Nordic trail (+/- 2 km).
- It has been discussed that a viable/attractive early season venue would require approximately 15 km of groomed set track to be of interest to the National Nordic race community. To accomplish this, Frisco would need to allocate roughly 7 to 8 acre feet of water to the coverage of Nordic trails, in addition to the 5 acre feet presently allocated for the area proximate to the lodge.
- Additionally, this concept would require the installation of approximately 50,000 linear feet of snowmaking lines and power plus an additional pump and the necessary guns for coverage.
- Making snow in long narrow areas (along a Nordic trail) is remarkably inefficient and becomes quite expensive. Using data amassed from other projects, SE Group calculated that covering the discussed 15 km of Nordic trails would be on the order of \$3M for the necessary snowmaking infrastructure. This is a maximum-case figure and assumes that a linear trail would not have any significant looping or repeat use (e.g., two laps around a 7.5 km trail).
- Additionally, to be advantageous in the early season, snowmaking would need to be completed as early in November as possible. In some seasons this would be possible, but frequently Frisco experiences temperatures well above snowmaking requirements in October and early November.
- The capital requirement, physical challenges, and difficult timing make this planning concept relatively unappealing.



Learn to Ski Program Enhancement

Opportunity

- Presently, Frisco and Copper Mountain Resort (CMR) collaborate in offering learn to ski/ride lessons at the FAP. Frisco provides the facility, CMR staffs it with a certified ski/ride instructor.
- Past seasons have seen roughly 200 to 250 persons engage in this program.
- In part, the program is challenged by the limited skiing terrain offered and the absence of on-site rental equipment (participants must bring their own equipment or rent it separately in town).
- It has been noted that, thus far, neither the Town nor CMR has put substantial effort into promoting this opportunity.
- Lessons are \$79. CMR takes \$59 and the Town retains \$20.
- The opportunity lies in the proximity of this program to Frisco for guest that may simply want to “try skiing” once or may have inhibitions around going to one of the big resorts.
- Due to the high demand of the tubing operation, the hill space used for the Learn to Ski program is allocated to additional tubing lanes until early January. Thus, this program is not offered over the holidays.
- Additionally, the FAP offers a “Ski & Ride Participation” program which allows guest to ski the hill utilizing the lift for \$30 per day. Due to the limited skiing terrain, this is not particularly popular with the majority of guests using it as an add-on to their Learn to Ski participation from the previous day.



Learn to Ski Program Enhancement

Planning Considerations

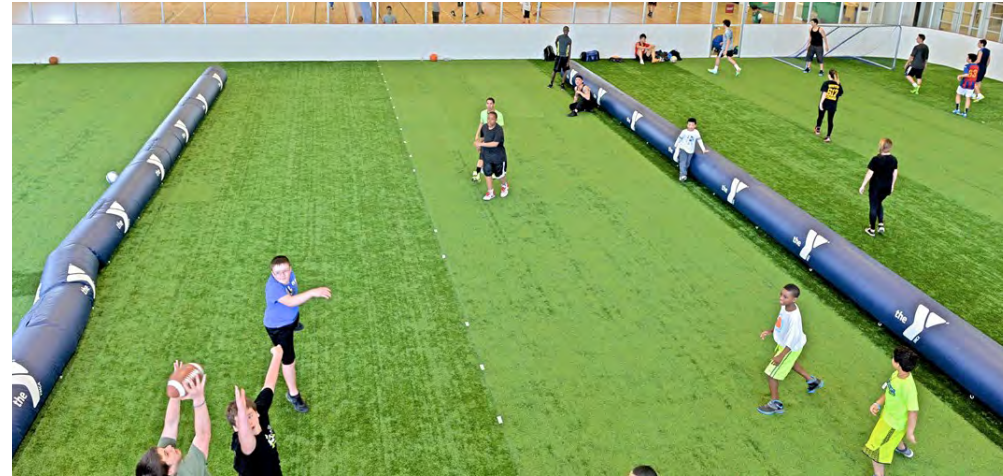
- Given the fact that Summit County hosts roughly four million skier visits each winter, there is clearly a ready market to bolster this offering.
- One opportunity would be for Frisco to house and stock a limited fleet of rental equipment on-site.
 - » Costs involved in this endeavor would include a small rental facility (perhaps a yurt +/- \$30,000) and the rental stock (adequate size ranges, skis and boards \$15,000).
 - » Daily rental rates in Frisco (Pioneer/Christy sports) are \$13 kids, \$18 adults.
 - » Assuming that 60% of the participants would rent on-site and that the program could grow to approximately 600 participants annually (double in size), the rental program could capture roughly \$5,400 annually in additional revenue. Margins, after expenses, would be about half (+/- \$2,700).
 - » Based on the level of investment required and the potential limited return, this option would not be worth pursuing.
- If the overall learning program could simply be promoted and could double in size (600 participants annually) the revenue for the Town would grow to about \$12,000 per winter. Because Frisco simply collects a fee on this program, the majority of this would be realized as additional profit.



Community Field House

Opportunity

- Nearly every Summit County resident has had direct or indirect experience with youth sports training and competing in the snow—both fall and spring.
- An indoor field house would be a remarkable addition to the Summit County community.
- Within the June 2015 *Town of Frisco Community Survey*, 29% placed an “Important or Extremely Important” value on a “Field House/Indoor Multi-Purpose Use/Space.”
- Several Summit County municipalities have considered this concept. While all see the benefits, none seem to have the ability/capability to take it on individually.
- The Western Eagle County Metropolitan Recreation District (WECMRD) was established in 1980 and broadly incorporates eight individual communities to provide recreational activities and facilities.⁵
 - » The WECMRD Field House was constructed in 2009 and provides 57,000 square feet of indoor space.
 - » The facility includes a 15,000-square foot artificial turf field, a 30-foot rock climbing tower, a 1,000-square foot bouldering wall, gymnastics area, gravity center (trampolines and foam pit), skateboarding half-pipe, medium size basketball court, rest rooms (no locker rooms), meeting rooms, multi-purpose room, storage, mechanical area, and office space.
 - » The facility cost \$8M in 2009 including all furnishings, fixtures, equipment and amenities (\$8.7M in today’s dollars).
 - » Annual operating costs are approximately \$600,000 including utilities.
 - » WECMRD is able to recover approximately 75 to 80% of their annual operating costs from use fees and long-term use agreements.
 - » Use of the indoor turf field is \$100 per hour.



⁵ Eagle, Edwards, Gypsum, Bond, McCoy, Cordillera, Lake Creek and Wolcott.

Community Field House

Planning Considerations

- A Summit County facility could/would likely include fewer and/or different amenities. For example, the Edwards facility provides a gravity center with foam pit. The Woodward facility at CMR already provides this in Summit County. Similarly, the indoor climbing component is presently provided by the Summit Climbing Gym in Silverthorne.
- Providing an indoor turf field of 15,000 square feet could be accomplished in a facility of 20,000 to 25,000 square feet if these other features were not programmed in. In that case, the capital costs might be more on the order of \$4M. Operating costs would be similarly reduced.
- While the Town of Frisco may not be interested/able to accomplish this project individually, there may be sufficient interest/momentum to create a Summit County Recreation District with participation of all the communities to take this on and locate it within the PRA.



Conclusion + Recommendation

The addition of summer tubing presents an immediate and lucrative opportunity for the Town of Frisco. It is one of the few elements evaluated which promises to provide a substantial return and make additional net operating income available to fund subsequent projects (on the order of \$300,000 per year). Other projects evaluated all have merit and would likely be supported by the community. If the addition of summer tubing was leveraged as a catalyst, the majority of the additional activities could be “self-funded” by the FPA—over time.

This brief evaluation should be considered an initial investigation. Based upon Council’s direction, each element evaluated could be further refined both in terms of spatial fit on the site (a site planning exercise), an in-depth assessment of capital costs, more carefully developed revenue/expense projections, and a better definition of capital origination. If Council is interested in pursuing several of the amenities evaluated herein, ultimately a sequential phasing program could be easily developed which identifies the projects and the timeline they might be developed within. This phasing study would evaluate the rate at which the summer tubing opportunity may be capable of providing the necessary capital for some or all of the other amenities evaluated.

