

Citizen Concern About EMS for Shadow Mountain Bike Park

from Joe Wienand, 8360 S. Warhawk Rd., Conifer, CO

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The purpose for my comments tonight is to describe the impact of the proposed Shadow Mountain Bike Park on the Elk Creek Fire Protection District Emergency Medical Services. The bottom line is: the impact will be significant.

There is a fair amount of research on injuries at existing down-hill bike parks. I have included the references which show where I got the numbers used in this statement, at the end of the document. The Shadow Mountain Bike Park developers indicate it will have on average 70,000 – 80,000 bikers per season (ref 1). Peak riding days will see 750 bike riders, which means about 5,250 bikers per week. Since the bike park will be open at least 36 weeks per year (ref 1), even estimating just 3000 riders per week is over 108,000 people per season. So, let's identify a more realistic estimate at 100,000 bikers per year. Medical studies indicate that these bike riders will have over 16.8 severe injuries per 1000 hours of downhill mountain biking (ref 2). Another medical study of downhill bike park injuries, at a park with 100,00 riders per season, shows 75 ambulance transports over just 147 days of operation (ref 3). If we translate that to the Shadow Mountain Bike Park season, there will be over 138 ambulance transports during their season or a 51% increase for Elk Creek FPD's ambulance service due to the bike park. And this will be compounded by 30% overlapping calls for the district's ambulance as currently observed.

The Elk Creek District will receive no impact monies in the form of mil levy or other funds from local or state government for this 51% increase in service. The district will have to extract some form of money from the bike park developers or just remain silent and provide emergency service to the best of your ability (as indicated in your will-serve letter).

If the Elk Creek District decides to do nothing, the taxpayers will have to accept a lower level of service because EMS will be stretched even thinner providing less service to taxpayers. Or voters will have to be convinced to vote for increased mil levies more frequently to cover this 51% increase in service.

So, what can be done. First, the district could talk with other fire districts that serve downhill mountain bike parks and see what their experience has been. Maybe select a “neutral” sports medicine consulting company to work with the district and bike park developers to complete a study, which can be used to derive a fee structure for this increased service.

If nothing is done, just know there are over 2000 Elk Creek Fire Protection District residents that have already signed a petition opposing the bike park and most understand this impact to emergency medical service that will occur, if the bike park goes into operation.

References:

- 1. Bike Park Application Narrative, dated January 23, 2023**
- 2. British Medical Journal Bike Injury Study, 2012**
- 3. The Epidemiology of Mountain Bike Park Injuries at the Whistler Bike Park, British Columbia (BC), Canada, 2012**