

Bekee Hotze, Salt Lake District Ranger
6944 South 3000 East
Cottonwood Heights, UT 84121

RE: #49583 Patsey Marley Shrontz Utility Right-of-Way

Dear Mrs. Hotze,

Friends of Alta is a public charity dedicated to conserving and protecting the environment and character of Alta. As Alta's local land trust, we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to provide scoping comments on possible impacts from the proposed Patsey Marley Shrontz Utility Right-of-Way. At this point the proposed action was presented with minimal details, especially regarding the ingress and egress to the proposed garage. Due to the nature and scale of impact from the proposed action we request more information be granted to the public and we have a number of questions that we hope will help guide the USFS in providing a better understanding of the project's proposed action. The maps accompanying this proposal need to be put to a scale that accurately illustrates the location of any disturbances or changes to the existing layout, especially winter travel layout changes that could affect people on foot, skis, split board, snow cats and more. Are there maps in the Patsey Marley Hill Subdivision Special Use Permit Application that illustrate the proposed action, including the preferred alternative or any alternatives under consideration that could be shared with the public to more effectively communicate the alternatives under consideration?

Based on the purpose of serving single family residences we feel that the utilities installed must be limited to 220 volt lines so as not to indirectly induce or promote further development outside the Town of Alta's service area.

While we respect the Shrontz Estate's ability to access their private property, we have some concerns on the impacts to public access and recreation uses, as well as impacts to the health of the watershed. We do not support paving any portion of the Albion Basin Summer Road. Paving any portion of the road will set a precedent, leading to additional paving requests and indirectly encourage development pressure in a sensitive watershed area. Adding impermeable surfaces (such as pavement) to a culinary watershed area increases runoff, negatively impacting groundwater recharge. Also, there is a difference between paved and unpaved roads and how we experience the natural world; a paved road puts one more barrier between us and nature, while unpaved roads provide a sense of adventure and being off the beaten path. People are more likely to speed on a paved road than unpaved and it will be harder to enforce a 15 mile per hour speed limit on this section of road increasing user conflicts between people on foot and bikes with automobiles. When the gate is closed, the summer road is busy with walkers, joggers, hikers, bikers, families with kids and more. That use decreases dramatically when the summer road is open to cars. People are excited and get joy from recreating on the summer road and there is a "oh bummer" feeling when the road reopens and people have to go elsewhere. It's seen as a special treat in the shoulder seasons when the gate is closed. Speeding vehicles and dust also deter people from using the road. Paving a portion of the road would also likely lead to additional development pressures in Albion Basin and as the local land trust, our mission is to maintain the open spaces in Alta we all love and cherish.

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From the information provided, it is difficult to truly discern how the proposed configuration of the entrance to the summer road would function for all users in the winter. Is there even enough space or existing grade to develop two 12' ingress and egress lanes and a 10' shoulder entrance? In the winter, that's 34' to be shared with 70% of that space dedicated to vehicle access to the garage. This configuration doesn't sound balanced. If we assume that in the winter the 24' of pavement would be exclusively for vehicles accessing the parking structure, and the remaining 10' of shoulder is for all the other historical uses, it doesn't seem feasible that all uses can occur in the space provided. The displacement of the historical uses on the summer road seems to be too great. The 2014 Settlement agreement between the Town of Alta, Salt Lake City and the Shrontz Estate states in section 1.3 on page two that "The Estate acknowledges that the existing road right-of-way is not maintained in the winter months in the area of the Subdivision and that the use contemplated by the Subdivision shall not block or interfere with current users, including but not limited to skiers, over-snow machinery, other recreational users and property owners of the road." Where will the snow cats and snowmobiles that have historically been parked just past the gate on the left be moved to? Without better illustrations we simply can't imagine how all these uses could coexist in such a small space.

While there are advantages to the Shrontz parking garage being located on their private property, there may be alternative locations for the garage that could avoid such great interference with public uses at the entrance to the summer road. Assuming that in the winter, the 10 Patsey Marley Subdivision homeowners will not be able to drive to their private property, a garage to the southeast of the Albion Basin Summer Road gate could be an alternative that allows the Patsey Marley Subdivision full access to a garage and ability to use over snow vehicles for accessing their property via the summer road while having very little impact on existing users. Another possible location could be on the north side of the road just west of the summer road gate - existing roadside parking could be maintained to not lose spaces in town. And lastly maybe the Alta Ski Area and Estate could work out a partnership where the garage could be added to the existing cat shop, further minimizing the garage's footprint. These ideas certainly need much more vetting but are worth considering if minimal interference with the existing users is desired.

We look forward to staying engaged in this proposal and receiving more information from the USFS on this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,
Jen Clancy, Executive Director (on behalf of the Friends of Alta Board)