

of the money that construction drops into the local economy to be spent on local goods, services and wages. Overall, the destination resort would contribute an additional \$244 and \$229.5 million in output to the two-county economy over the small-scale scenario in years 10 and 20, respectively. "To put this estimated level of output into perspective, the total year 10 output of the destination resort is roughly 3.2 percent of the total 2007 output in the entire two-county economy," the report states.

Admittedly, the report does not address whether these estimated economic benefits are worth their costs. According to the report, those costs include, for example, whatever environmental and natural resource amenity might be sacrificed by converting the higher elevations of Carlton Ridge/Lolo Peak from a natural area to a ski slope, and the transportation system impacts from the additional trips generated at the resort.

The report discusses impacts of the development on local government revenues, schools and development goals and finds the effects relatively neutral: the area population is expected to increase rapidly in the next two decades even without the destination resort, it says.

"Demand for retiree and second homes in Missoula and Ravalli counties, which will surely burden local infrastructure and services, will persist whether the destination resort is developed or not," the report says.

"I believe if the Bitterroot Resort was up and running and successful, the Bitterroot Valley itself would experience some property value increases as well as increased tourism," said Bitterroot Valley Chamber of Commerce President Al Hill. "There's a trend in western Montana for people buying secondary homes already, but the resort could increase that on a faster pace than we're already seeing."

While ECO's task was extensive, the company was not charged with making a policy recommendation, rather to describe impacts. The company charged \$40,000 for the analysis and solely reviewed the economic impacts of the development, not environmental and other fiscal costs.

"Identifying and estimating all those costs, and weighing them against the benefits of the development, is beyond the scope of our research..." the report states. "Thus we cannot make a recommendation about whether the large-scale resort should be approved or not."

What they can say, however, is that the amount of additional economic activity that the large-scale resort would contribute to the study area is large, both relatively and absolutely.

More information on the analysis can be found at [www.maedc.org](http://www.maedc.org).

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