

Beyond the funicular (4) – Glen Coe, Canyon Triple

Description

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Photo map of suggested new chairlift on Meall a' Bhuiridh that would replace the single seat Cliffhan two sections of dotted line mark potential future extensions.

(This is the last of four posts [see here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) about how the £14-20 million proposed by Highlands and Islands Enterprise to repair the funicular could be better far better spent on snow sports

within the geographical area for which they are responsible).

Proposal

A new triple chairlift adjacent to the Wall T-bar would replace the Cliffhanger Chair giving on ski access to the Main Basin T-bar and directly serve the full spectrum of green, blue, red and black terrain.

Detail



Current pistes and lifts map credit Glencoe Mountain. Cliffhanger is tow 3.

The proposed lift would start on slightly lower ground in front of the Plateau Cafe and slightly below the Cliffhanger Drive Station. The proposed lift would run on a NNE/SSW axis to the north west of the Canyon (black) terminating on a natural ledge of level ground just above and behind the Rescue Station at the base of the Main Basin T-bar.

The top station would be at an elevation of 870m, some 30m above the top station of the single seater Cliffhanger Chairlift. Unlike the Cliffhanger Chairlift the proposed lift would provide ski-off chair / ski-onto tow access to the Main Basin T-bar and Rannoch Button that serve the upper mountain. It would thus also provide direct access to the Wall and Canyon areas, which like the top tows currently require a short uphill walk from the top of the Cliffhanger.

In addition to easing rider flow around mid-mountain and between mid-mountain and the upper towsthe proposed alignment has additional advantages over the Cliffhanger alignment:

- Construction of proposed lift does not interfere with operation of existing infrastructure, thus could if necessary be phased over two summers.
- Significant increase in mid-mountain uplift capacity combined with improved rider flow, coupled with the big capacity boost of the under construction Rannoch Triple Chair on the Plateau, should ease pressure on top tows as a larger number of riders will complete full vertical laps each run.
- With a new improved bridge over the mountain river it would be accessible from the Wall without the need to cut short the run as required for the Cliffhanger.

It is proposed that the new lift would replace the Cliffhanger Chairlift, but that the Wall T-bar would be retained for peak capacity and alternative uplift when north-west winds don't allow the chair to run. .

The lift capacity needs to be finely tuned between achieving a beneficial increase that changes how people ride the mountain to spread the load across all the uplift more effectively, yet at the same time not having so much capacity that it can completely swamp the upper leg of Mugs Alley (narrow green) leading to an unpleasant experience and increased risk of accidents.

Future Development

This proposed lift has been placed so as to have potential to be incorporated into a further phased upgrading of the uplift on Meall a' Bhuidh.

As per the dotted purple line on the photo, the alignment of the proposed new Canyon Chairlift has the potential to extend upwards to the top of the upper tows and a short distance downwards to the point of natural convergence of various mid-mountain runs to the north west of the Kassbohrer Garage.

Days potentially lost to wind in severe weather, should be considered against burial closures which afflict the upper ski tows in even moderately big snow years. It is the good days that the top tows can't physically be dug out that cost more income than storm days where only a handful of people would brave riding the upper mountain.

Additionally, such a chairlift would likely enable the upper mountain to open earlier than the present arrangement and remain serviceable later in the season and/or in leaner snow conditions too, in part by freeing up the robust snow holding of Ski Tow Gully as an additional ski run.

With this potential future development in mind, the proposed Canyon Chairlift should be built with new towers for a modern 6 seater detachable chairlift so the existing towers would need no modifications for a subsequent extension.

Return to the base of the full length lift would be assured through the majority of seasons with an automated snowmaking system on Old Mugs Alley to the base of the chairlift. This future lift extension could be configured with the flexibility for a non-detaching mid line loading station to serve either just the upper or mid-mountain as required in marginal conditions.

The projected uplift above the Plateau elevation would ultimately in this scenario consist of just a 6-seat detachable chairlift and the retained Wall T-bar.

What you can do [Editor]

If you agree that new ski capacity at Cairn Gorm, the Lecht and Glen Coe would be a much better investment than repairing the funicular, as argued by Alan in these posts, please consider responding to HIE's Survey on its new "vision" for Cairn Gorm ([see here](#)). While the first two questions appear designed to put anyone off responding, below there are a series of questions where you can indicate what type of development, if any, you think are appropriate for Cairn Gorm and you can prioritise your preferences.

Category

1. Cairngorms

Tags

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