



Vail Mountain School Synthetic Sports Field: The Vail Mountain School's aesthetically attractive synthetic soccer field fits into its setting. It is surrounded by real grass and is landscaped to blend with both its neighborhood and natural surroundings. [© Photography – James Franklin Lamont](#)

VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

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Ford Park Parking Structure Proposal: A Town of Vail master planning process for Ford Park is scheduled to begin in the next several months. The scope of the planning process has yet to be defined. One component receiving consideration will be the construction of a one level 700± vehicle parking structure to be covered by an artificial turf playing field. The proposed parking structure will also necessitate investment in a transit terminal and Ford Park roundabout to facilitate the distribution of Frontage Road traffic and to enhance express mass transit service to the Park.

Parking Structure Projected Costs: It is doubtful that the Town can fund the project from its existing revenue sources. Some proponents say that with an estimated \$4.3 million in Town of Vail seed money - matched with private funds, they can build the project for approximately \$30,000 per parking space; resulting in a very preliminary estimate for the project cost of \$21 million. The Town seed money would come from a previous pledge from Vail Resorts, Inc. (VRI) to the Town of Vail, received in years past when the company withdrew from a proposed Town sponsored convention center on VRI land in West Lionshead. A local newspaper editorial suggested that Vail Resorts fund the project.

Demand for More Parking Questioned: The rationale for the parking structure is based on a Town parking and transit study; which some believe may be flawed because of imperfect population projections. Others believe that the structure is not necessary because parking demand will dissipate in two years with the completion of several large construction projects being built in Vail Village and Lionshead. Additional "employee" parking is possible; however, employees will also be in competition with skiers, event patrons and day visitors for the available parking.



Ford Park Proposed Synthetic Sports Fields: It would be a major challenge for a synthetic sports field similar to the Vail Mountain School synthetic field to be as attractive when installed on Ford Park over a large parking garage. The sides of the proposed parking structure, to eliminate mechanical ventilation costs, most likely would be open, similar to the Lionshead Parking structure.

Finance through Property Tax Increase Not Likely: Some business interests say that they need more parking for their employees. The Ford Park structure could help fill their needs. However, there does not appear to be much enthusiasm for increasing property taxes to fund the structure. Under Colorado law, commercial property pays three times the residential rate in property taxes. Some business owners say they are already under stress from current economic conditions. Likewise, many residential property owners are disgruntled with an average 40% increase in their property tax bill for 2008 and 2009. According to informed sources, any speculation would be ill-founded that the Vail Recreation District (VRD) has interest in increasing property taxes to participate in constructing the parking structure.

Limited Benefit as Skier Parking: In winter, advocates say the parking will be well situated to serve the up-mountain ski-portal at Golden Peak. However, knowledgeable sources say that ski facilities at Golden Peak are not able to adequately serve a major new source of demand. The Golden Peak ski base has very limited ability to generate sales tax revenues for the community that could be pledged to offset the cost of the Ford Park parking structure. The Ever Vail development proposed by Vail Resorts in West Lionshead is far better suited as a sales tax generating portal to Vail Mountain as there are hotel beds as well as extensive commercial and publicly available parking associated with the proposal.

Summer Benefit from Improved Access: In summer, some believe that more parking is necessary for events held at the Ford Amphitheater. However, there has been no proposal to expand the amphitheater. Over the past several years, the existing pedestrian walkways, parking and transit links from Vail Village and at the Park appear to have, for the most part, adequately served these events. There are advocates for the need to increase parking in the Park for the access impaired and the convenience of an aging population.

Concerns have been raised by some that the more public parking for events at Ford Park, the less benefit to sales tax generation; because patrons residing outside of Vail appear to return to their home base rather than relocate to other parking structures in Vail to dine or shop. The original intent for building summer entertainment amenities at Ford Park was to generate positive cash flow from sales tax revenues for Vail Village and the community. If this intent is bypassed, some say that additional revenue sources will need to be identified to justify the public investment.

Mass Events a Potential Source of Revenues: Some special event promoters believe the park's sports fields can be used for entertainment events on a much larger scale than those held at the Ford Amphitheater. Plans have been shown publicly that indicated the sports fields could be used for these types of mass events. Without the Ford Park parking structure, it is possible that such events could overwhelm current public parking facilities in Vail Village and Lionshead. Additionally, mass events have the potential to conflict with events being held at the Ford Amphitheater.

Implications for the Golden Peak Residential Neighborhood: The Golden Peak neighborhood, which abuts Ford Park and the Golden Peak ski portal could benefit from the Ford Park parking structure if it was used to reduce the traffic congestion throughout the neighborhood during peak periods and on weekends during the ski season. However, some councilpersons appear to support expanding the soccer field parking lots.

The proposed sports field parking structure gives Golden Peak residents leverage to negotiate for reducing traffic generated by events held at Ford Park. If the structure is approved, the Town will need to allocate additional revenues to augment pedestrian circulation and other streetscape improvements to handle the increased foot traffic generated by larger and more frequent events held at Ford Park. The Golden Peak neighborhood represents a large and active membership block in the Homeowners Association.

Critics Don't Want Further Urbanization of Ford Park: Critics of further urbanization of Ford Park have begun to voice their concerns. Interestingly, some may be willing to consider a parking structure proposal. Their goal is to remove all surface parking and eliminate any view of parked vehicles from the park and surrounding area. They want the lots returned to natural open space and bermed to deflect highway noise away from the Ford Amphitheater.

For some, the same perspective is held towards restoring the tennis courts to bermed natural open space. Some believe there is the need for an effective landscaped sound barrier between athletic activity areas and the performing arts. In their view, the tennis courts should be moved onto the surface of the parking structure or relocated elsewhere. Others prefer no parking under the sport field. They prefer a two or three deck parking structure built under the existing parking lot near the tennis courts.

Likewise, support may be forthcoming if locations for year-round community amenities are incorporated into the park. The additional amenities would be served by a large parking structure. Opposition would be heightened if the proposed uses of the parking structures would preempt or preclude the use of the structure's parking spaces in fulfillment of any parking requirement for year-round amenities.

Some critics of the further urbanization of Ford Park are activist members of the Association. They view Ford Park as an amenity that underwrites both the quality of their residential experience in Vail and preserves the natural environment from the impact of increased urbanization.



West Meadow Streetscape Improvements Begin: The \$2 million streetscape reconstruction project has begun. It includes drainage improvements, a new asphalt roadway and new street lights, as well as the installation of a raised brick paver sidewalk on the north side of the road, and an at-grade paver sidewalk on the south side of the road. Replacement of the planter at the turn-around near the Middle Creek Bridge and landscaping improvements will also occur. Work will continue until November 15 and resume in spring 2009.

Recognizing its role as a critical link between Vail Village and Lionshead, the Town of Vail arrived at the design concept for West Meadow Drive through a series of public meetings in 2001. The Homeowners Association worked with neighborhood property owners advocating that the project comply with their needs.

Winter Public Parking Strategies: The Town of Vail's Parking Advisory Committee recommended to the Town Council that parking rates be increased for the upcoming ski season. The committee also recommended that the discounted parking rate for Eagle County residents be eliminated, unless they work in Vail. The impact from increased parking rates is partially offset by the decline in the cost of a season ski pass from Vail Resorts. The additional revenues will most likely be needed to help offset expanded demand on mass transit systems. The committee viewed this recommendation as a short-term measure necessary to respond to a perceived increase of day skiers layered upon the increased demand for construction worker parking.

Vail Resorts does not perceive a parking problem based upon their analysis of the impact from their season ski pass policies. The problem, in their view, is short term; resulting primarily from having to provide parking for hundreds of construction workers building several large projects in Vail Village and Lionshead. The parking demand from these workers will dissipate over the next two years with the completion of these projects. Demand for parking should return to normal at that time.

To date, neither the Town of Vail nor Vail Resorts appear to be acknowledging that they may have operated outside the 1995 Category III agreement which provides procedures for resolving parking and traffic congestion issues. There are those who believe that VRI should have consulted with the Town of Vail before implementing its Epic Pass program. [See link to Category III Agreement.](#)

The Parking Advisory Committee's concept of temporary park and ride lots located in areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods is meeting with strong resistance from the affected neighborhoods. The concept is seen by some as the most expedient method to meet expected demand. However, the Town Council rejected a proposal to build a temporary 180 vehicle park and ride lot on the Chamonix Affordable Housing site in West Vail. If short-term on-street parking is considered in other Vail's residential neighborhoods, as is suggested by some, similar strong opposition can be expected. The underlying theme from critics is that residential neighborhoods are not obligated to absorb a problem not of their own making.

Frontage Road Parking: Discussions are ongoing between the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Town of Vail (TOV) staff regarding the TOV assuming control of certain sections of the Frontage Roads in Vail. If agreed upon, consideration could be given to opening the Frontage Roads to more frequent public parking. Some of the parking might be metered. Currently, there are an estimated 1000 cars that can be parallel parked on the Frontage Road. Diagonal rather than parallel parking might be considered if certain other safety improvements such as gutters, sidewalks, and cross walks were installed. Diagonal parking, depending upon conditions, could add 500± more vehicles to the Frontage Road parking inventory. One draw back of diagonal parking is that drivers must back into oncoming traffic, which brings up other safety issues and could reduce traffic speeds to the degree of causing unintended congestion problems. Critics of parking on the Frontage Road continue to raise safety issues with CDOT and others.



Ever Vail and Lionshead Parking Projects Remain at Odds: The Town of Vail and Vail Resorts have exchanged letters that further the disagreements that hinder both projects from proceeding to development. A rezoning application to the Town of Vail for a portion of the Ever Vail project has been withdrawn to be resubmitted in September. A series of community meetings have been held by VRI to gather reaction and support for the development of its new destination resort center. [See Ever Vail Public Presentation.](#)

The Vail Town Council has furthered its approvals for the Open Hospitality Partners proposal for the redevelopment of the Lionshead Parking Structure into yet another new destination resort center. The project is stalled until covenants are removed that provide for the site to revert to VRI's ownership should the Town of Vail, the present owner, seek to develop anything other than public parking and transportation facilities on the property. The hardening of positions is over the company's reluctance to release the reversionary covenant. The tone of their differences can be read in an exchange of letters between the two entities. [See links to VRI to TOV letter](#), [TOV to VRI response](#), and [VRI to TOV reply](#).

Vail Resort's position becomes evident given that an appraisal commissioned by the Town put the value of the site, if developed for commercial uses, well in excess of a \$100 million. The Town has not taken steps to condemn the company's reversionary covenant property rights, as it would require them to buy out those rights, perhaps at the appraised market value. Some conjecture that this amount could have an adverse effect upon the financial viability of the proposed redevelopment plan. The Town of Vail has taken the unprecedented position of linking the approval of the Ever

Vail development to the release of the reversionary covenant so that the Lionshead Parking Project, of which the Town is a principle partner, can proceed. Local print media has quoted sources calling the Town's position "blackmail."

Interestingly, designers say that a large convention center could be incorporated into the Ever Vail project. If possible, the prospect of a large convention center in Ever Vail eliminates the political pressure to build the Lionshead Parking Structure. For years other lodging interests, mainly in Lionshead, have been the primary political constituency advocating for a large convention center. The convention center is central to their belief that Vail should have a year round economy based on the convention trade. Over the last decade, there have been convention center proposals for both locations. After more than thirty years of pursuing this goal, there are those who question its desirability.



West Vail Chamonix and Timber Ridge Affordable Housing Proposals: The Vail Town Council has selected a conceptual plan for the development of a fire station and 58 unit affordable housing project for permanent residents in West Vail. [See link for approved concept site plan.](#) The designer proposed using pre-manufactured units as a cost saving method for the affordable housing. Work continues on ways to bring the project in line with the per unit sales price desired by the Council. Budgetary issues still remain for the construction and manning of the proposed fire station.

A committee to study the redevelopment of the Town of Vail owned Timber Ridge seasonal housing continues its work. It is expected that the Town of Vail will publish a Request for Qualification (RFQ) in the near term. A development proposal will be sought for all, or a portion, of the site. Some housing advocates would like the site to provide housing for over two thousand seasonal employees. According to some observers, the redevelopment can meet work force needs by creating both revenue-producing employee parking and living units. They see the potential to build employee commuter parking in conjunction with the housing, pointing out that a 200 square foot parking space can efficiently accommodate four employees, while a housing unit for the same number would be several times larger. If Timber Ridge is proposed as a six to eight-story high-rise, a parking structure for the project will be necessary.

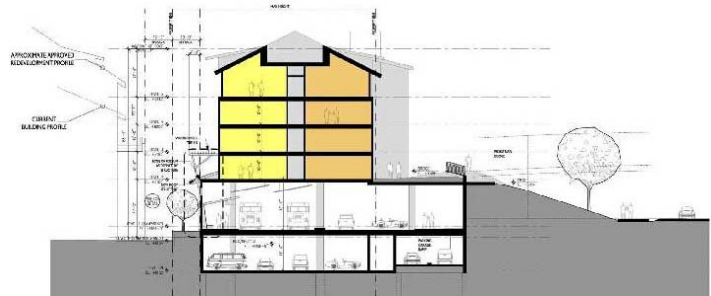
Currently, Timber Ridge's 199 units provide housing for 600 seasonal workers. The upcoming effort follows other prior attempts to redevelop the site. According to an authoritative source, one reason is the hurdle of a large un-recoupable cost, which thus far has stymied progress. Also, a bias against allowing any one entity, such as Vail Resorts, to control the allocation of units is a political sticking point. Through a master lease, Vail Resorts currently controls 159 units as a result of its efforts to keep the project from financial difficulty when mold was discovered in the project in years past. It is reported that Vail Resorts remains interested in participating in all or a portion of the redevelopment.



I-70 Fiber Optic System: Installation is underway of a closed circuit television (CCTV) to observe I-70 and Vail Frontage Road traffic conditions at key intersections throughout Vail. The Town of Vail, Colorado Department of Transportation and Eagle County are signing a \$640,000 agreement that will install a government owned fiber optic cable through Vail. The agreement hastened the extension of a CDOT fiber optic system that is being built westward along I-70 from Denver. The system gives greater communication capabilities among governmental agencies and with the public. The fiber optic system will enable authorities to improve the reliability of traffic management and emergency response by giving more detailed sources of information via a broader range of integrated media: including variable message signs, broadcast radio, internet, cable television

and cell phones. Town of Vail officials expect to have continuous live coverage of all three I-70 interchanges and portions of Dowd Junction available on CDOT's Internet based CCTV system and the Town's local government cable television channel before the coming winter driving season. Television coverage of the west side of Vail Pass and through Dowd Canyon is expected to be installed next summer, which would result in improved response to accident and adverse weather closures. The Vail Homeowners Association is an advocate for improving all aspects of the public communications system in Vail. It is actively working with Town officials to improve emergency response and evacuation communication systems in the event of a threat to public safety from a catastrophic wildfire or prolonged closure of Interstate 70.

Vail Village Master Plan Update: The process for updating the Vail Village Master Plan continues. The Town Council has commented on the Planning Commission recommendations. [See link for recommended changes.](#) The purpose of the updating is to keep the plan current with decisions that have been taken by the Town of Vail since the document was first adopted in the 1990's. The update acknowledges the further need to identify improvements that may be of historic importance and to take them into consideration in the development review process. It recognizes the larger Vail Village as a mixed-use area, which affirms the coequal importance to both commercial and residential uses - including affordable housing. More emphasis is being placed upon the hosting of outdoor special events, while recognizing the need for compatibility with adjacent and surrounding uses. Other controls over the location of commercial uses are to be explored, along with allowing the display of merchandise on public property. Environmental improvements are included that would create better regulation of storm water runoff into Gore Creek. The need to continue to improve traffic control and transit systems as well as increasing the use of existing private parking is recognized. Also affirmed is the recognition of broad participation, including residential property owners, on management committees for loading & delivery, parking, traffic, special events, construction impacts and other appropriate issues. The Vail Homeowners Association was instrumental in shaping several of the items included in the plan update.



Lionshead North Day Lot Transit Center and Affordable Housing Proposal: Vail Resorts has presented a plan to the Vail Town Council for the North Day Parking Lot, which fulfills their 120 bed affordable housing agreement for their Arrabelle at Vail Square development. The plan conforms with Lionshead Master Plan requirements for a Transit Center to be built on the site. The center is to handle large buses, smaller shuttle buses, and provide for a skier drop off function. The Town Council will decide if they will contribute nearly \$20 million to build the center and related improvements. The eastern portion of the site could be further developed into offices, parking and affordable housing. If the Council does not proceed, the affordable housing development will continue without the transit center, but maintain the skier drop off function. [See link to Option 4, skier drop off only.](#) There is no guarantee that a transit center proposed in the redevelopment of the Lionshead Parking Structure or the larger project itself will proceed any time soon. If it does, the North Day Lot center will handle smaller shuttle bus and skier drop off traffic. The TIF Fund, which is the revenue source to build the project, must be spent within the Lionshead urban renewal district. The Council will evaluate what other projects may be temporarily set aside to fund the transit center. The Center has been enclosed to contain noise and vehicle lights, so as not to disturb adjacent residential property owners. Discussions appear to indicate that the proposed Simba Run I-70 underpass will be funded in conjunction with the development of Ever Vail. [See link to design proposal](#) and [TOV Staff Transit Center financing report.](#)





Arrabelle at Vail Square July 4th Celebration: special events are bringing new street life to Lionshead.

[Contact editor](#)
[Membership Information](#)

Post Office Box 238
Telephone: (970) 827-5680
E-mail: vha@vail.net

Vail, Colorado 81658
FAX: (970) 827-5856
Web Site: www.vailhomeowners.com