



TOV goal for controlling access of cars and trucks via a multi-million-dollar system of retractable bollards.

VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

## *Letters to Vail*

### **Does Vail Need a Multi-Million Dollar Retractable Bollard System?**

March 21, 2023

In what could be another step toward more Special Events, the TOV Public Works Department is seeking the installation of retractable bollards to “secure designated event areas.” The plan is to install retractable bollards at various locations in the Town Center and at Ford Park at an estimated total cost of \$8 to \$9 million. Based on how initial estimates always seem to expand, the actual cost could be well north of \$10 million. While the goal of the plan is to “provide a safe and inviting pedestrian experience,” missing from the proposal was any incident of a vehicle v. pedestrian conflict at any special event in Vail’s history.



As presented, the plan consists of three phases: a pilot installation estimated to cost \$2 million, a second phase consisting of the installation of bollards around the Village core and Lionshead and the third phase with installations at Ford Park.(See Town Council [Memo](#) and [Presentation](#)) No where in the brief plan is there any

consideration of the yearly maintenance cost or the impact of Vail’s harsh winter months on operative ability. With only the barest of public notice and input, the Town Council has approved the first steps toward implementing the project. The selection of the initial site and construction of the first installation is set to begin in just a few months, i.e., late spring.

Never before has the Town rushed into a large-scale project of this magnitude with virtually no public notice (Council agendas only come out the Friday before the meeting). And while there was some public protest over the need and cost of project, it was approved without any consideration of whether it is sustainable to continue to expand special events, whether \$10 million dollars would be better spent elsewhere or the impact of installing bollards on surrounding neighborhoods.

The VHA is not opposed to enhancing pedestrian safety. It has long argued that Frontage Road parking is a pedestrian safety hazard. But for special events, the Town already bars vehicles in the event areas; it is therefore a serious question of whether it needs to spend an additional \$10 million to erect bollards to do the same thing. When put in proper context, this plan appears to be addressing a non-existent problem. What is a pedestrian hazard are bicycles and other similar conveyances, especially when electrically powered, weaving through crowded streets, something that will not be addressed by retractable bollards. While Vail posts “dismount” zones, there is no enforcement. If the goal is really to provide a safe and inviting pedestrian experience, the first step should be enforcement of the dismount zones.



Beyond that, the TOV has just spent \$260,000 to create its Steward Vail plan. Part of that plan calls for “an analysis of Vail’s capacity for visitation.” Vail has also embarked on a two-year 2045 mobility and transportation master plan before there has been any capacity analysis and before the result of the mobility and transportation master plan is known. Vail is rushing to supposedly improve its event capabilities. Before proceeding with the \$10 million retractable bollard plan it is launching that only addresses a non-extant problem, the Town should take a pause and critically examine the real needs for pedestrian safety.

And, it should consider the impact that a bollard system will have on surrounding neighborhoods. Will it push more traffic and parking into the neighborhoods?

Both should be done in the context of what is the best and proper use of \$10 million of the Town’s treasury. Already on the Town agenda is the new Civic Center development and the re-development of the Town offices, not to mention extremely expensive housing projects.

And all of this should be done with transparency and full public notice, not a quick announcement buried in an agenda which only allowed a weekend for consideration.

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VHA provides clear and concise discussions of matters affecting the Vail community in the belief that an informed citizenry will be an engaged citizenry. Our intent is to promote more citizen involvement and community discussion of issues facing the Town. If this is an issue that concerns you, please make your views known to [town officials](#). By joining with VHA, as a member, paid-subscriber or reader you can add your voice to sustain what is good about our community and to shine a spotlight on important issues.

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