



Cascade Village is in need of a master redevelopment plan

Letters to Vail

V a i l H o m e o w n e r s A s s o c i a t i o n

TOV Master Development and Redevelopment Plans

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Master Development and Master Redevelopment Plans have evolved into a patchwork for the Town of Vail, (TOV). This is in part a result of areas being incorporated into a municipal government in the 1960s or subsequently annexed into the Town at different times, East Vail in the 1970s and West Vail in the 1980s. A Master Development Plan (MDP) is a land planning technique that combines traditional lot and block zoning with architectural design, transportation, environmental, social, and economic guidelines in the development of a community. Vail was one of the first resort communities to use this technique to guide its development.

TOV zoning was established according to how the land was or was intended to be used when the Town of Vail was formed or when areas were annexed into the Town. By Colorado law, zoning depends on an approved Master Development Plan.

Master Redevelopment Plans amend the original Master Development Plan. A Redevelopment Plan is adopted according to the TOV's determination of an area's obsolescence, deterioration or need of refurbishment. The TOV can use the Master Redevelopment Plan as a tool to implement urban renewal and related special taxation options, incentivizing redevelopment and to finance associated public improvements which it did in the 1990s for Lionshead.

A public review procedure is required for Master Development and Redevelopment Plans. The purpose is to mediate between those who currently live or own property in an area and the changes the TOV would like to impose in the future. Property rights, fairness and compatibility issues among existing and new developments come into play.

Master Development Plans are only as good as the consistency of enforcement by TOV authorities, which is dependent on the participation of its citizens to express themselves about what they desire for their community and neighborhoods during the public review process.

In the TOV's early development, it created the Special Development District (SDD) as part of its zoning regulations. A Special Development District is a zoning tool that allows uniform development standards to be partially waived in exchange for the developer's investment in publicly accessible amenities, services and improvements. SDDs initially were applied to large tracts of undeveloped land or tracts having an obsolete use and included a mix of residential and commercial uses served by on-site parking structures.

The TOV uses the SDD to negotiate with developers to invest in amenities and infrastructure improvements needed to handle population increases. The early success of the SDD led to the TOV allowing SDDs to proliferate on smaller sites rather than be applied solely to larger sites as originally intended.

SDDs on small sites allowed bigger buildings that were inconsistent with the size of neighboring buildings to be built in residential neighborhoods. This raised the issue of neighborhood compatibility. It created a sense of special treatment and inequality among property owners.

Compliance with a Master Development Plan or Master Redevelopment Plan is required for TOV approval of an SDD. Cascade Village, located west of Lionshead, was among the first to receive an SDD zoning designation on March 2, 1976.

Creating SDD's fell into disfavor in the 1990s due to the perception of inequitable application of zoning rules and neighborhood compatibility issues. Since that time, the TOV abandoned the practice in favor of rezoning. Rezoning also requires compliance with a Master Development Plan or Master Redevelopment Plan, which is to be prepared and adopted before rezoning an area for development or redevelopment. This process occurred in the TOV's adoption of Master Redevelopment Plans for Lionshead, Vail Village and West Vail.

The underlying premise of Master Redevelopment Plans is to create additional commercial and residential development by an estimated 30 to 50 percent, thereby increasing tax proceeds to pay for associated public improvements. To an extent, the strategy has proven successful but is not without major defects. Inflating the potential for growth deflates the competitive advantage gained in a seller's market of scarcity in supply, a tactic which Vail has benefited from and paid a penalty for. Policies that promote resort commercialism do so at the expense of a more diversified and inclusive residential community.

VHA [invites letters of interest](#) to assist in its membership and reader development efforts.

VHA is a member and reader-supported non-profit funded by voluntary annual dues and contributions of paid subscribers and readers. Many members are part-time resident property owners from Vail's founding generation, their children and succeeding generations of first-time owners who have discovered the intangible qualities that Vail brings to their lives. As Vail grows, community and political activism have become more complicated and costly.

Memberships and contributions fuel the VHA Reports, and *Letters to Vail*, and help VHA respond to important issues, expand its reach and ensure transparency. VHA is thankful for the support and participation of the Vail community. We pledge to remain at the forefront of advocating for the mutual interests of full and part-time residents and property owners.

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