



View east of the upper Eagle River valley from Edwards to Eagle-Vail beyond Avon

Letters to Vail

VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

August 31, 2023

Vail Town Council Election Issues: Water Supply – Part 2 of 3.

Conservation alone will not be enough to meet the demand for service by projected development in the Upper Eagle Valley. The reduction in outdoor irrigation is tied to the Upper Eagle River Water and Sanitation District's plan to expand its customer base and increase rates.

The District needs a strategy to replace revenues from Vail as it approaches full development. When reached, the question arises: why should Vail pay for further development beyond the Town's boundaries?

Under the District's model for the future, the upper valley can accommodate ten times more development which is eight times more than is possible in the lower valley. The lower valley is said to lack adequate resources to handle greater density of development.

The lower valley currently attracts workers employed in the upper valley because it has more attractive housing affordability and community lifestyle. To achieve the District's aims, it will need the reserve water rights held by Eagle County.

Why should Eagle County give up its water right's reserves to the water district to underwrite the development of more density in the upper Eagle Valley? The rationale, according to the District, is that more workforce housing is needed in the upper valley.

The District estimates that the Town of Vail has reserve SFE's to build 6 million square feet of additional development. Which, if built as 3,000 square foot residences, would amount to 2,000 units of housing, an estimated 5,000 additional residents. Both Vail and Beaver Creek have sufficient supplies to ensure snowmaking and means to provide for on-mountain services.

The reserves are well within the Town's 2016 goal of adding 1000 units of workforce housing by 2027. If workforce housing tenants are Vail only workers, at the pace the TOV is moving to commission housing projects to be completed by 2027, workforce shortages may no longer be the issue that currently drives all other decisions in the Town. At what point does the TOV taxpayer no longer have an obligation to subsidize housing for workers who are employed outside of Town?

The perceived threat of water scarcity is causing municipal and county land use planners to reassess their undeveloped reserve stock of zoned housing and commercial use. Controlling the allocation of water supply becomes a paramount concern when Vail takes steps, through its sustainability planning, to stabilize the composition of its resident and visitor populations.

The District says increases in user rates will be used to pay the cost of replacing and expanding the water and sewer systems per their plan devised to concentrate population in the service area from Vail westward to Wolcott. (See VHA research of development related issue in the Upper Eagle River Valley.) Five thousand additional housing units are planned in an area encompassing Vail (2000 SFE) to Avon (3000 SFE) which includes Eagle Vail. There is to be a doubling in the size of Minturn through the proposed Eagle County School District's development of 120 units at Maloit Park and Battle Mountain land (700 SFE) development. More is to follow in Edwards (500 SFE) and Wolcott having development proposals of between 350-577 dwellings and 10,000 sq. ft. to 140,000 sq. ft. of commercial.

The District's intention is to provide enough water for its users through the construction of a \$100 million reservoir at Bolts Lake south of Minturn. The question is raised: why would Vail bear the financial burden of paying for a project that primarily benefits others outside of its boundaries when it has adequate reserves to meet its needs at full development?

VHA's role, over the course of the Town Council election as voiced in its communications, intends to stimulate discussion of important issues and to provide insight into the candidates' qualifications and perspectives. VHA is hosting interviews and mentoring sessions with candidates and community leaders. Contact VHA for times and locations.

The election is mail-in balloting. [Access TOV Town Clerk Election and Registration Information.](#)

The questions raised by VHA should be asked of the Candidates for the Vail Town Council. The candidates include the following:

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Samantha Biszantz:	sbiszantz@gmail.com
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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 discussions of issues facing the Town. If these are issues that concerns you, please make your views known to candidates and [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. See back editions of VHA communications on the Association's website.

To receive VHA letters and reports as a Reader, Paid-Subscriber or Member.

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