



Left to right, top to bottom: (1) Redevelopment Plan for West Vail Commercial Center; (2) Civic Area – Dobson Arena, Evergreen Hotel, Vail Municipal Building site, Middle Creek developments and the recently expanded Vail Health Hospital and outpatient clinic; (3) West Middle Creek is proposed as a mixed free market ownership with subsidized residential housing; (4) Legacy at Vail in Lionshead, a residential/commercial high-rise; (5) West Timber Ridge subsidize residential housing; (6) Cornerstone, the first in series of changes being considered for Cascade Village.

# Letters to Vail

## What's Next: Development Projects Underway - Part Two

December 21, 2024

The Town of Vail (TOV) has development principles that have yielded a half-century of success with planning and development guidelines that help to avoid pitfalls and overcome obstacles while maintaining character and quality of future building. These principles are central to the Town's ongoing success as a leading international resort and transformative recreational life-style community. The Town has the wherewithal to guide its future growth by adhering to its planning and development principles.

The following is an overview of commercial and government development projects under consideration for implementation as conditions warrant.



**2017 Ever Vail Plan, Vail's 5<sup>th</sup> mountain portal**

**West Lionshead Redevelopment:** The area located west of the Lionshead commercial center is a service and distribution hub for the resort and the community. It includes the Vail Resorts (VR) maintenance yard, offices, employee parking and the primary sewer treatment plant for Vail and East Vail. It is the last large tract of land available for redevelopment within the Town's city limits

Over the decades there have been multiple redevelopment proposals for the area, including a convention center. A 5<sup>th</sup> Vail Mountain portal concept was adopted in 2017, known then as Ever Vail. The plan included parking, transportation, service and distribution functions within its confines.

The intent was to establish a major transportation terminal and parking structure to accommodate day-skiers. Also planned was a workforce housing complex with support facilities. Financing and development for the project were to be modeled on the redevelopment success of the Lionshead commercial area. The project was stillborn. Shortly after the 2017 plan was announced, VR disbanded its in-house development and real estate divisions. Since VR's inception, real estate development had been an essential ingredient in leading growth in the Vail community and on-mountain. Ever Vail languished for 20 years, failing to attract financial and developer backing.

The recent settlement of the TOV's acquisition of the bighorn sheep habitat restored the missing ingredient by bringing in a highly experienced real estate developer to fill the void. The new partnership between VR and the Town enables what is now being referred to as the West Lionshead redevelopment to proceed. To what extent the 2017 plan is to be reconfigured will come to light in the coming months as public hearings on the project proceed.



**Civic Area**



**West Middle Creek**

**Civic Area (2 & 3) :** The area is midway between Vail Village, Lionshead, East and West Vail. To date, planning and intended uses of sites indicates movement toward long-held desire to balance growth at the heart of the community.

The Civic Area is bounded on the west by the Lionshead Transportation Center, on the east by the Vail Health Hospital, on the south by Gore Creek and north, across I-70, Middle Creek workforce residential housing. Currently, the area houses the TOV Municipal complex, Dobson Arena, the Public Library, Vail International Condominiums and Evergreen Hotel. There are and have been multiple plans to redevelop several of the properties in the area; most notable are the Vail Health Hospital— already nearly fully redeveloped; Dobson Arena -initial plans have been made public; the Evergreen Hotel and the Municipal complex - design for both are in



process. In addition, a major mix of private and publicly owned residential housing is being proposed across I-70 on the West Middle Creek site.



**West Vail Commercial Center**



**West Timber Ridge**

**The West Vail Master Plan (1 & 5):** The plan was adopted by the Vail Town Council in August 2021. West Vail is the area west of the Vail Post Office and Cascade Village to Dowd Junction. The centerpiece of the plan is the redevelopment of the West Vail commercial center and surrounding neighborhoods. New height and density standards have likely been set by the six-story West Timber Ridge workforce housing project now under construction. The commercial center is to be a mix of residential and commercial uses on a scale similar to West Timber Ridge. Increases in density are anticipated in other existing West Vail residential neighborhoods.



**Lionshead Redevelopment (4):** The Lionshead Master Plan adopted in the 1990’s remains in effect. The Lazier Building is the first redevelopment in the Lionshead urban renewal district in several years. The luxury residential property is to be named the “Legacy at Vail Square”. It has TOV approval with two live-in residential apartments for on-site workers, an issue with workforce housing advocates.

The special tax-related urban renewal financing for public projects that the Town holds is reaching an end and is a potential problem for the TOV if the taxing authority is not renewed.



**Cascade Village, Vail’s 4<sup>th</sup> mountain portal**

**Cascade Village (6) :** The proposed Cornerstone development is a mixed-use project located adjacent to the Cascade Village ski lift. The project remains under discussion. Conjecture is that the proposal is a springboard to a more intensive development of Cascade Village.

The proposed Cornerstone development is zoned as a Special Development District (SDD), as is much of Cascade Village. The nature of the TOV’s Special Development zoning district gives the Town Council wide latitude to negotiate restitution for the impact that the development imposes upon the Town’s services and facilities.

There is ongoing interest in the community for the TOV to acquire the land containing the unused tennis courts at the east end of Donovan Park, owned by Cascade Village development parties. The site is suitable for some form of community recreation and child-care center.

There is an opportunity to construct a pedestrian bridge over I-70, connecting Timber Ridge community housing with Donovan Park. Interconnecting high-density workforce housing with a recreation and child care center would be an effective and safe means of knitting together residential neighborhoods that are now on opposite

sides of the interstate highway. Vail’s Lionshead to Sandstone I70 pedestrian bridge is a 50-year success story. Joining together neighborhoods separated by Interstate 70 helps unify the community.

It would be prudent for the TOV to set aside open space and right-of-way that can be used for a pedestrian bridge. The Town’s pre-development engineering is traditionally prepared with shovel-ready projects that qualify for State, Federal, and institutional funding.

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A reader confides, “I’m writing to say that I hope the VHA continues to serve its very important role as a watchdog and advocate. VHA’s efforts have been invaluable at keeping folks “honest” and letting local government and officials know that someone is watching. The bigger Vail gets, the more the VHA is needed.”

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VHA is funded by voluntary dues pledged annually from condominium associations and individual property owners. Members are primarily the part-time resident property owners from Vail’s founding generations. As Vail grows, traditional assumptions of political activism have also become more complicated and costly.

VHA is a member and reader-supported non-profit. Memberships and contributions fuel the VHA reports, *Letters to Vail* and help VHA respond to important issues, expand our reach and ensure transparency and coverage. VHA is thankful for the support and participation of the Vail community. We are pledged to remain at the forefront of advocating on behalf of the mutual interests of full and part-time residents and property owners.

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