



Stair-Stepped Design of Middle Creek Affordable Housing Project – Vail, Colorado

[Photograph © James Franklin Lamont](#)

# VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

## Newsletter May 2008

**Economic Snapshot:** Vail and Eagle County housing real estate sales in mid-priced categories are slowing. Vail Village retail sales tax receipts lost ground in February, down 2.6% for the same month in 2007, this according to the Town's February Sales Tax Report. Lionshead's retail receipts advanced a dramatic 37.5% due to the opening of the Arrabelle complex. Anecdotal reports indicate that construction activity within the community and region may be starting to ebb, as there is an increase in subcontractors soliciting work. Some contractors see a shift in their business away from new construction toward remodels. There is greater competition among unskilled workers for available off-seasons jobs, a circumstance some employers have not seen in years. However, finding qualified employees remains a challenge for nearly all employers.

**Vail Affordable Housing Issue:** Affordable housing officials continue efforts to increase requirements for affordable housing on development projects. Affordable housing and slow-growth advocates are aiming regulations primarily at commercial and residential developments, which cater to part-time residents, retirees and guests. Some real estate developers are complaining that with sagging economic conditions the added expense of affordable housing requirements will strangle the development industry in Vail and throughout Eagle County.

**Thousands of local and regional jobs in Eagle and surrounding counties are dependent upon development and real estate.**

The out-migration of the industry's workforce can be expected as development is negatively impacted by the effect of a national recession, inflation, and increasing government requirements. The out-migration, which has occurred in Vail and the surrounding region in prior recessions, temporarily improves the availability of workforce housing, giving relief until the next development-boom cycle. If economic conditions are severe enough, regulations to slow or control growth are typically reversed.

The Town of Vail, with few places to build affordable housing, has passed a new regulation requiring 50% of its recently adopted affordable housing requirements to be built into all new development. The Town of Vail's affordable housing advocates are also proposing that 30% of the workforce be housed in "deed-restricted" housing.

Currently, public policy calls for 30% of the workforce to be housed in both "free market" (non-deed restricted) and deed restricted housing units. The change is potentially significant. Housing officials are assuming that 800 "free market" units that house 1200 employed persons will be converted to part-time resident ownership and occupancy. Seven hundred "deed-restricted" units now house 1050 employed persons.

Officials and advocates are proposing to maintain the status quo. Their goal is to house all 2,250 employed persons in deed-restricted units. It is estimated that Vail current local population is 4,500. Housing advocates are seeking to insure that at least 50% of the local population remains in the workforce. Currently, workforce housing occupies 23.5% of Vail's 6,500 housing units. The policy proposal is being made to insure that proposed Town of Vail sponsored affordable housing projects, like Timber Ridge, are used to replace the projected loss of existing "free market" housing units rather than allow them to satisfy the affordable housing requirement generated by new development. (See Survey Below)

**Affordable Housing Design - Double Standard:** The Vail Council rejected applying the same stair-stepped design standard to the proposed Solar Vail Affordable Housing Project that was required of the Middle Creek Affordable Housing Project. The Solar Vail proposal is highly exposed and readily seen from throughout Vail



**Potential Vail Employee Village Site:** Existing Solar Vail, Red Sandstone School, public open space and stair-stepped Middle Creek Affordable Village and Lionshead. The stair-step requirement is used throughout Vail to cause large buildings to appear less massive, blend with adjacent buildings and harmonize with the natural landscape. This may appear as too fine a point for some, particularly those migrating from traditional American urban and suburban areas. Vail has always striven to be



Architect's Proposed Solar Vail Redevelopment

steps above the norm, using its sophisticated architectural standards as a selling point for its success and as a tool to blunt the negatives created by Interstate 70 and other similar deficiencies.

**While the Solar Vail proposal has its attributes, it could have more, particularly since it has additional zoning rights to build more square footage, a rarity in Vail.**

The Association urges the developer to cover the parking lot, with a lower rise structure so that the building could appear to step back up the hillside, as does the Middle Creek Project. The strident community debate over the Middle Creek Project was reconciled on its stair-stepped hill side village design. The Solar Vail development shares many of the same attributes of location and topography.

Importantly, there is an indication from some members of the Town Council that additional affordable housing could be built on the adjacent hillside public land to the east, as well as on the Red Sandstone School property. One of the conditions of approval by the Council is to provide for a joint use driveway which would allow access to the land east of Solar Vail. It is conceivable that an entire employee housing village, similar or larger in size to Middle Creek, could be built at some point, subject to public approval. Consequently, the importance of setting the best possible design standard for the first building in a larger future complex has increased importance.

Some affordable housing advocates and others on the Council want to establish the precedent to allow a large multi-story monolithic building on the Solar Vail site, so that similar buildings can be built on the Town owned Timber Ridge site and elsewhere. They see gaining political advantage as more important than the community's long-standing qualitative

architectural design standards. It is important to note that any effort to place similar sized development in West Vail is being vigorously opposed by residents in these largely local residential neighborhoods.

The Council rejected the Association's position that the Solar Vail Project meet similar design standards that were required of the Middle Creek Affordable Housing Project. The developer of Solar Vail would give no specific time table for commencing construction on the Project, but indicated a willingness to look at the articulation of the building mass. The Council did not follow through on this offer. Others, however, continue to urge the developer to modify the design of the Solar Vail proposal.

Similarly, there is a new development proposal being promoted to build affordable housing adjacent to Highway 6, near the east end of the Vail Golf Course. Another proposal is being made for the open spaces berm area of the Vail Village Parking Structure. There are concerns that some Town Councilpersons, developers and affordable housing advocates are having difficulty showing qualitative design intent in their affordable housing policies and projects in areas of the community, other than West Vail.

**Vail Village Master Plan Updating:** The updating of the Vail Village Master Plan is underway by the Town of Vail. The updating is to be a reaffirmation of the Plan and inclusion of changes that have occurred in recent years. Expect recommendations that will retain the existing character south of Gore Creek. North of the creek, unprotected open spaces buffers adjacent to the Vail Village Parking Structure will be subject to continued pressure for retail/office expansion and affordable housing development. The Association has raised the issue that the Town has yet to commit to a long range strategy and plan for upgrading the Vail Transportation Center to handle increased usage and other modes of transportation.

The Town of Vail is requesting the Association and its members participation in the updating of the Vail Village Master Plan. The Master Plan is a guideline for future change. **Email the Vail Homeowners Association** to forward recommendations regarding the degree of acceptable change for Vail Village in the 2008 update of the Vail Village Master Plan. ([Link: Town of Vail Web Site](#))

## Commentary – Bart Cuomo



### Town Thinking About Developing Every Last Square Inch in Vail?

The Vail Town Council is discussing a plan from a Maryland-based developer to develop the narrow strip of land between the Vail Village parking garage and Meadow Drive across from the Austria Haus, Mountain Haus and Vail Mountain Spa. The proposal would be to build “affordable” housing for local professionals (\$500,000-\$1,000,000), offices, shops & restaurants. We say SLOOOOOOW DOWN! The Town seems determined to develop every last inch of Vail. What do you want to turn Vail into? ([Link to Vail Realty Newsletter](#))

## Commentary – Kaye Ferry:



### No to Frontage Road Parking until Vail Resorts starts the Ever Vail Parking Structure.



South Frontage Road – Lionshead, March 2008

Why do we have a VR (Vail Resorts, Inc) parking problem that's not being solved by VR?

Why are the only suggestions ones that use town's assets? Like Ford Park. Or the Wendy's lot. Or Vail buses? Or even more frontage road parking? Better yet, why would Vail Resorts ever use their land and cash to solve the problem if we continue to do it for them?

They will never step up to the plate unless they have no choice. And no choice starts with eliminating frontage road parking until they participate. Start the Ever Vail lot [parking structure for between 400-500 vehicles] and the frontage road is good to go until it's finished. Don't and it isn't. Easy. It's time to force the issue.


([Link to Ferry's Full Commentary](#))

**Town of Vail Frontage Road Parking Policies Clarified:** There were 48 days of Frontage Road parking this season compared with 25 days the previous season. This figure is similar to the 45-to-50 days in 2000-01 when the Colorado Pass was introduced. The highest number of cars on the Frontage Road this season was 1,070 on Saturday, Jan. 12.

Two factors control parking on the Vail Frontage Roads:

- 1) Town ordinance (Title 7-3A-13: Parking Emergency) prohibits parking on town streets unless a parking emergency is declared by the police chief, town manager or his/her designee
  - 2) Colorado Revised Statutes (43-2-135 g) gives Colorado Department of Transportation Division-authority to review whether streets which are state highways have adequate facilities, such as space for travel lanes, shoulders, parking lanes, snow storage, lighting, sidewalks and safe pedestrian crossings.
- TOV policies currently require both parking structures to fill before declaring a parking emergency as it relates to skiing, Fourth of July and other activities that place equal demand on both parking structures. However, a parking emergency may be declared if a parking overload occurs due to an event impacting a particular geographic area, such as Ford Park or Vail Cascade. In this case, both parking structures are not required to fill before declaring a parking emergency on the Frontage Road at Ford Park or Cascade.
  - CDOT does not issue fines for Frontage Road parking in Vail. If a concern exists, CDOT would send a letter to the Town expressing such concerns and would ask the Colorado State Patrol to begin enforcing a no parking policy on the Frontage Road.
  - CDOT expressed concerns about the 6-week period of daily parking on the North Frontage Road in West Vail this past season due to the extended duration of the parking emergency.
  - TOV's goal is not to exceed 15 days of emergency parking on the Frontage Road during the winter. This number represents a 90% capacity design for public parking. The 10% overflow is 15 days during a 150 day ski season.
  - An additional 400 public parking spaces are needed to return to the 15-day overflow goal.

[\(Link to Parking Task Force discussion of parking options\)](#)

 **Denver 2018 Winter Olympics bid still at play:** The prospect of Vail becoming the Alpine racing venue in a proposed Denver Winter Olympics continues to be pursued. It appears that there is a shift away from support by some local power brokers for Vail to have coequal billing with Denver in the naming rights for the event. Olympic authorities are expected to make a "next step" decision in the fall of 2009. The "next step" announcement in itself, with astute leadership, could push the Vail community to a higher level of quality. The Olympic event, if the Denver bid is successful, is ten years off, giving ample opportunity for preparation.

**Property Owners'-Voting Rights:** Vail property owners, including all non-resident property owners, served by the local electric company, Holy Cross Energy, can vote for candidates to the utility's Board of Directors. The candidates for the Vail region are both long-time Vail locals: George Schaffer and David Campbell. Brief statements from each are included with the ballot. A ballot is contained in the Holy Cross Newsletter announcing their up coming Annual Meeting. Votes need to be cast by the individual of record on the Holy Cross account, and received before the Annual Meeting, Friday June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008. There is one vote per account. The Annual Meeting will take place at 6:30 P.M. at Holy Cross' warehouse facility located at 3799 U.S. Highway 82, Glenwood Springs CO. People may also vote in person prior to the general business portion of the Annual Meeting and results should be known a few days afterwards.

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Survey and Membership Information Follow:

**Vail Homeowners Association Survey – May, 2008 Send Responses: [yha@vail.net](mailto:yha@vail.net) Survey Questions:**

The following questions are to determine if the Town of Vail should further regulate affordable housing so that it requires more affordable housing to be built that has a cap on price or rent appreciation and that those qualified to live in affordable housing conform to quotas of desired job profiles necessary to operate the resort economy.

**Should the Town of Vail:**

**Require that 30% of Vail’s workforce live in “sale price/rent and job occupation controlled” affordable housing within the Town boundaries?**

**Require that 30% of Vail’s workforce live in either “free market” or “sale price/rent and job occupation controlled” affordable housing within the Town boundaries?**

**Take no further steps to require additional affordable housing within the Town Boundaries?**

**Encourage more of its needed workforce housing to be built within the surrounding region?**

**[Link to Vail Homeowners Association Membership Information](#)**

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