

# Neighbors kill possible \$5M noise wall in Vail

Four facts

**What:** A proposed underpass linking Vail's north and south frontage roads.

**Where:** About halfway between the Main Vail and West Vail interchanges.

**Estimated cost:** About \$29 million.

**When might it start?** If finally approved, work could start in April, 2016.

**VAIL** — The future of a possible Interstate 70 underpass is still in limbo, but the project won't include a noise wall if it's eventually built.

Town and state officials have long tried to find a way to build the underpass — the north side of which would be at the Simba Run and Savoy Villas condominiums, about halfway between the main and west Vail interchanges. The project is seen as a way to reduce traffic at the roundabouts, help in-town traffic, make the town's bus routes more efficient and speed response times for emergency-services vehicles.

## SURVEY

Part of the planning process for the underpass included an environmental study that included the effects of highway noise on residents near the underpass. That noise study triggered a federal requirement that affected neighbors — known as “benefiting receptors” in government-speak — would get to vote on whether or not to include a noise wall with the project. A survey was sent to 203 affected property owners, including the town of Vail, which represents the Timber Ridge property. Those surveys accounted for a total of 406 votes. Of the returned surveys, 59 percent, or 210 votes — opposed the noise wall.

That survey effectively killed a feature that could have added nearly \$5 million to the underpass project as a whole.

## FUNDING

The challenge now is whether the state and town can find money to pay for the project, which has become much more expensive since it was first approved for funding in 2013. The new estimated cost is \$29 million, up from the original estimate of just less than \$21 million. The town of Vail originally committed to pay \$6 million of the project's cost. If the Colorado Transportation Commission approves funding for the project, then the town's share would rise to about \$8.4 million, assuming the state and town stick to the original cost-sharing formula.

The decision to approve the additional funding is likely to come in April of this year.

Vail Daily Business Editor Scott Miller can be reached at 970-748-2930, [smiller@vaildaily.com](mailto:smiller@vaildaily.com) and [@scottnmiller](https://twitter.com/scottnmiller).