



Triumph Development 2024 Design for West Timber Ridge – Is this the best Vail can do for its workers and the community?

Letters to Vail

VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION Vail Workforce Housing – West Timber Ridge – Part 2 March 20, 2024

For many years the Vail community and its leadership have been concerned that burgeoning growth would take it down a path of mediocrity as a result of overdevelopment and congestion. To safeguard against decline, design restraints and other measures were adopted which have served to bring financial and social success to the community. It is important to remember that surveys conducted by the TOV consistently list Vail's charm and quaint village as a major draw for visitors and residents alike.

The intent of the zoning and design guidelines is to convey an image of non-theme park authenticity that maintains the community's curb appeal by avoiding the appearance, perception, and consequences of urban sprawl. Design guidelines vary the shape of large buildings, blending them with natural appearing landscape while concealing parking and back-of-the-house functions from public view. In the Vail Village and Lionshead commercial cores, the Town finally achieved having truck free streets when the loading and delivery program came into full operation in 2022.

Two workforce housing projects, [West Timber Ridge](#) in West Vail and [West Middle Creek](#) closer to Main Vail, have recently been, or are currently, in the TOVs approval process. One fits the definition of being a complex of sterile stereotypical high-rises, the other does not. The architectural design of the Timber Ridge high-rise buildings is by a developer who has been involved with multiple TOV housing projects.

While VHA and others in the community strongly support developing workforce housing in suitable locations, they are critical of warehousing workers in high-rise, high density projects that are out of character with the community's outward appearance and expectation for comfort and services.

West Timber Ridge Redevelopment: Officials justify the location, size and design of both developments largely because they do not block views from neighboring properties. What is ignored is that both will be viewed by all who pass through on I-70, the Frontage Roads and multi-use pedestrian paths. As currently designed, West Timber Ridge adds to an undesirable urban sprawl appearance. There is a lack of suitable natural landscaping to screen or soften the boxy high-rise appearance. Due to wild fire regulations, it is even more challenging to hide shortfalls in design behind a landscape of tall trees.

The West Timber Ridge project is devoid of attractive design details. Its architecture echoes the initial design of the Residences at Main Vail, which was rejected by the TOV's Design Review Board (DRB) however their decision was overruled by the Town Council.



Triumph Development design of Building E, one of seven, similarly appearing structure in the West Timber Ridge project.



Lion's Ridge Apartment Homes built on the eastern half of the Timber Ridge Site. Developed by a team of Vail based firms included RA Nelson, Gorman & Company and Berglund Architects.

In 2015 the east portion of Timber Ridge was redeveloped into Lion's Ridge apartments with an entirely different, and more acceptable appearance, although at considerably lower density than what is being proposed for West Timber Ridge.

Concept design for 2009 proposal to redevelop West Timber Ridge.



Concept design for 2010 proposal to redevelop West Timber Ridge.



DRB comments about the [2009 and 2010 designs](#), link to VHA Report archive, for the redevelopment of the Timber Ridge housing project was critical of the quality of the construction being proposed for the redevelopment of the West Timber Ridge site. The Town Council had arrived at a financial arrangement with a developer to retire its \$11 million debt, which was incurred in the 1970's original development of the site for worker housing. Even though there were default punitive damages to be assessed if the project was not approved by the TOV, the project did not proceed.

The 2024 West Timber Ridge development, scheduled to begin construction this spring, perpetuates a long-held attitude of using West Vail as a location for projects not attainable or theoretically acceptable elsewhere in the confines of the Vail community. Design sketches for the 2009-2010 project proposals were much more in keeping with the Vail image and product than the 2024 project.



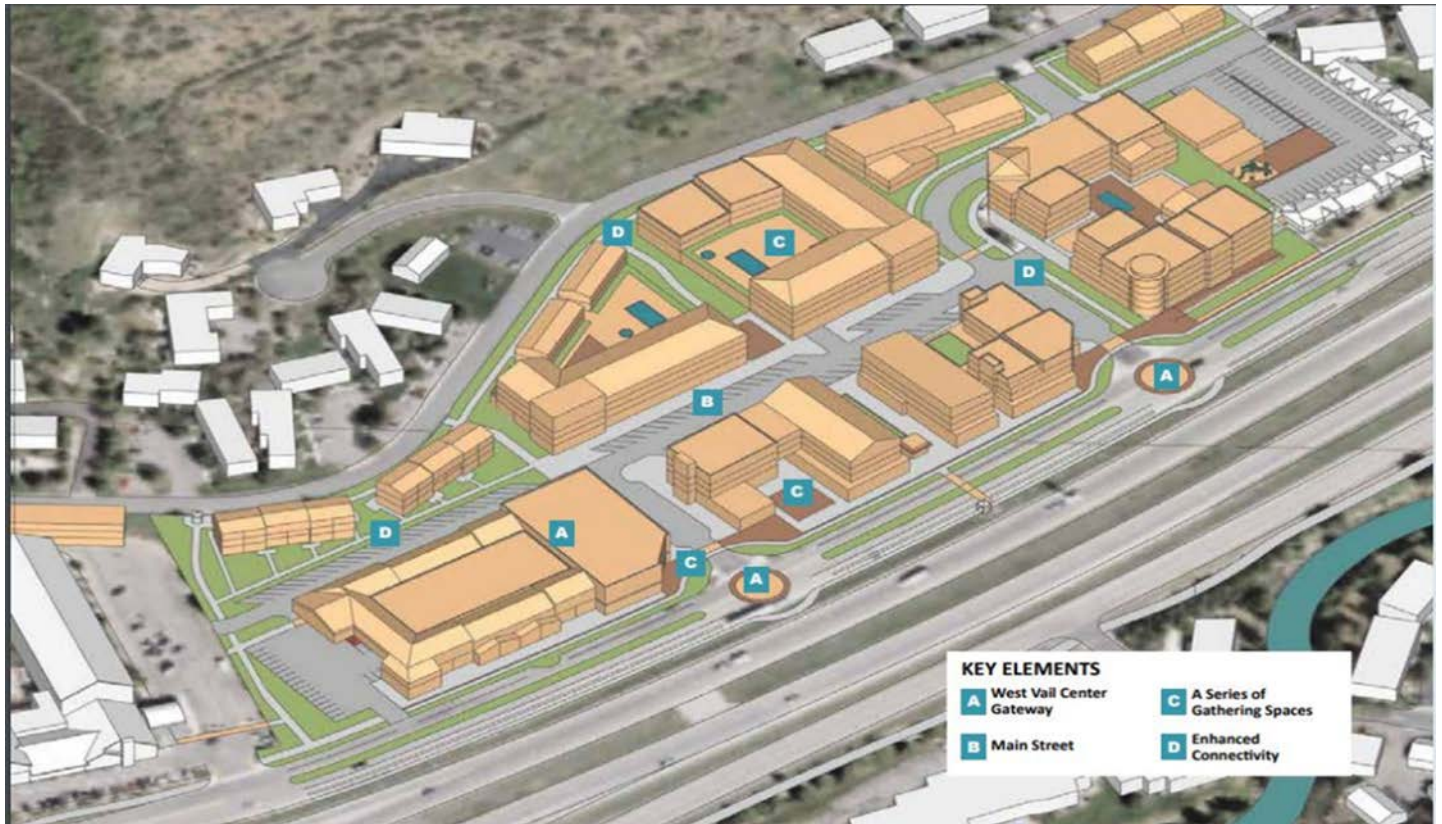
The current plan includes 548 beds, replacing 188 beds in the fifty-year-old complex which is being demolished. It is to be financed in part by the purchase of its apartments by local businesses, which is not a risk adverse

Triumph Development illustration of West Timber Ridge.

proposition. Previous speculative work-force housing projects have been converted to unintended uses including short term tourism rentals, a use contrary to the goal of creating housing for local workers.

Densely crowding workers into high-rises on limited acreage without inclusion of meaningful amenities and services is not worthy of Vail. If the project proceeds as currently designed, the TOV should commit to constructing a pedestrian bridge over I-70, a bridge linking the Timber Ridge redevelopment to existing and future recreational and open space amenities on the lower bench of Donovan Park. It would complement the high-density living environment and insure easier access to jobs and businesses on both sides of I-70.

A serious consideration is that West Timber Ridge could set a precedent that could be applied to rezone nearby residential neighborhoods to higher densities. Adding height and density perpetuates the cycle of the TOV practice of trying to build its way out of deficiencies resulting from overcrowding and congestion caused by earlier development



Concept for redevelopment of West Vail Commercial Center.

The West Timber Ridge project on the North Frontage Road is adjacent to the US Post Office and is within walking distance to the West Vail Mall. The Mall caters to the domestic needs of Vail’s resident population and offers a handful of reasonably priced eateries. A few empty store fronts have recently appeared in the Mall which is of concern. The vacancies are attributed to down valley competition. The TOV adopted a high density, [conceptual master plan for the redevelopment of the commercial center](#). The design is reminiscent of Lionshead density. The plan for the Center includes significant increases in residential housing and commercial areas. The question arises, how seriously has the TOV considered population and traffic increases in West Vail? No start date for implementing the West Vail Master Plan for redevelopment of the commercial center, has been established.

VHA serves the Vail community with information, having a perspective not readily found elsewhere. Our publications and activities are funded by membership dues and contributions from paid-subscribers and readers. 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.

VHA strives to provide clear and concise discussion 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 discussion of issues facing the Town. If this is an issue that concerns you, please make your views known to [town officials](#).

Contact:

vailhomeownersassoc@gmail.com

Post Office Box 238 Vail, Colorado 81658

Telephone: (970) 331-2099 Email: yha@vail.net Website: <https://www.vailhomeowners.com>

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