



Ford Family Pavilion at Ford Park - Vail

Photographer – Jim Lamont

VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vail Voting Procedures Need Changing: The results from recent local elections have shown that the convenience of a mail-in ballot was a large factor in increasing voter turnout. Unfortunately, in most local elections voter turnout is not even close to a majority of the voters. Minority control enables special interests to dominate governance. A more engaged and active electorate would make for sounder government. Mail-in ballots should be adopted for all Vail area elections, including the Town of Vail.

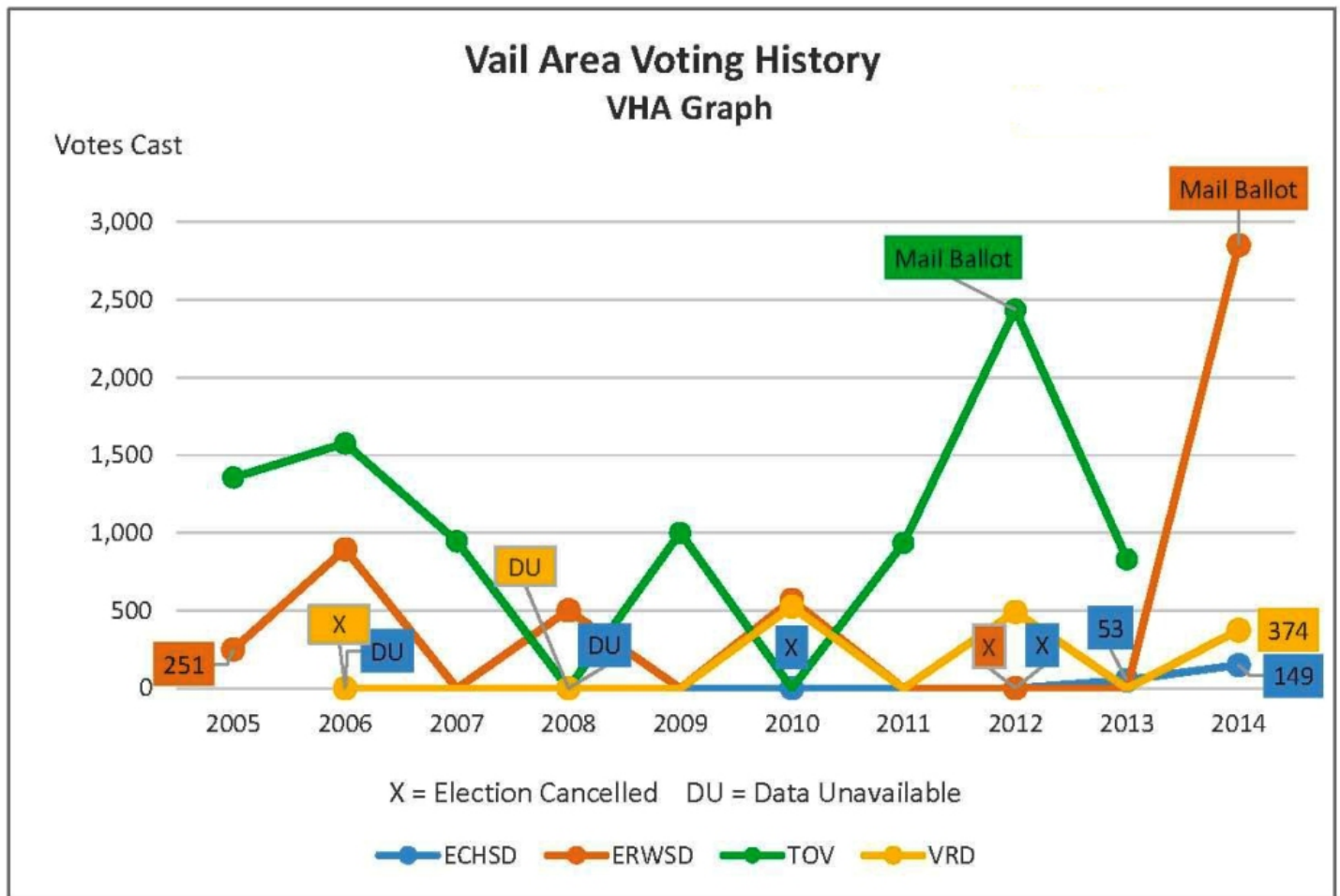
Slicing Up the TIFF Pie: TIFF Funds are collected by the Town of Vail on new private construction, such as EverVail or a redevelopment of the Evergreen Hotel/Condominiums. TIFF is a major source of TOV's finances for public improvements. Developers want the TIFF they generate reinvested to benefit their own projects. With major public projects ahead, such as the Gore Creek clean-up, the Simba Run I-70 underpass, a possible new parking garage and the redevelopment of the TOV municipal offices, there may not be enough TIFF funds to cover all of the desired projects.

Post 2015 - Refocusing the Vision: In a few short months, Vail will host the FIS World Ski Championships. For some time, the focus of the community has been on preparing for that event and the TOV has done much to spruce up the

community and prepare to host the world. Once the world leaves, it will be time to focus on the future. VHA believes that will be an excellent time to pause and reset priorities going forward.

VAIL ELECTIONS

Mail-in Ballots' Success: It's sometimes hard to learn much from election results but the May 2014 elections in the three separate special taxing districts that provide Vail with water & sewer services (the Eagle River Water & Sanitation District), recreation facilities (Vail Recreation District), and ambulance services (Eagle County Health Service District) show that mail-in ballots resulted in increased voter participation. Prior to these elections, except for a few instances of coordinated elections with Eagle County, all three special districts used the traditional walk-in polling places/voter requested absentee ballot system. For the 2014 elections, VRD and ECHSD continued with that same system but the ERWSD used a "mail ballot" for the first time. This was required by law since their ballot measures would affect tax rates for property owners. The District mailed ballots to all registered voters within their district boundaries and to individuals owning taxable property within their boundaries who were registered to vote in Colorado. Reflected below is data available on the voter turnout over the last 10 years for the Town of Vail and the 3 special districts listed above.



VHA [Chart](#) and [Data](#) Comparing Poll Balloting with Mail Balloting for Vail Municipal and Special District elections over the last ten years.

Participation in the 2014 ERWSD election jumped by 402.11%. While some of the ERWSD increase might be attributable to get-out-the-vote efforts by VHA and others, as well as voter interest in the issues (ERWSD proposed bond authorizations for construction of new facilities), it seems clear that the convenience of a mail-in ballot was a large factor in the increased turnout. That conclusion is backed up by the results of the TOV 2012 elections in which the TOV also used mail-in ballots as part of a coordinated election with Eagle County and voter participation leaped to 58.61% of registered voters. ERWSD is to be commended for their execution of the mail-ballot requirement for their 2014 election and the corresponding increase in voter turnout. VHA encourages the ERWSD, the Town of Vail and all other special districts in the area to use the mail-ballot system permanently.

Minority Rule: While the ERWSD substantially boosted its rate of voter participation, it did not come close to a majority. There were 2,852 votes cast in the [ERWSD 2014 election](#) out of 15,094 eligible electors who were mailed ballots, for an 18.89% participation rate. That is still significant minority rule, which seems to be a feature of governance throughout Vail. For example, with the exception of 2012 when the TOV used a mail-in ballot, voter participation in the TOV elections has been on the decline even as the number of registered voters has been steadily increasing. In the TOV 2013 elections, voter participation was only 19.52% (831 votes cast out of 4,257 registered voters). While this rate is similar to the 2014 ERWSD rate, a town municipal election should normally have much higher participation rates than those for special taxing districts.

Voter participation for the [2014 VRD election](#) was even lower with a meager 8.43% rate (374 votes cast out of 4,435). But the voter participation for the [2014 ECHSD election](#) was almost nonexistent at less than 1% (0.54%, or only 149 votes cast out of 27,606 voters registered in the district). Unlike the TOV municipal election, individuals registered to vote in Colorado, and their spouses or civil union partners, are eligible to vote in any of the state's special district elections where they own taxable property under their individual name (not under a corporation, partnership, trust, etc.). Nonetheless, participation remains low. The voting rates are so small that they should spur the governing authorities to take action to educate voters and encourage public participation in the governance of the community.

Is Extreme Minority Rule the Future? Minority control enables special interests to dominate governance. Both the 2014 VRD and the ECHSD elections were controlled by a handful of voters (374 and 149 respectively). Special interests may have already taken control of the ERWSD (see below). If participation rates continue to drop, entities like the ECHSD and VRD run the risk of becoming so moribund that they could be candidates for dissolution. A more engaged and active electorate would make for sounder government. It seems clear to the VHA that mail-in ballots should be adopted for all Vail area elections, including the TOV. That would greatly increase voter participation.

Elections Have Consequences.

As a result of the 2014 election, present or former employees of Vail Resorts now occupy four of the seven seats of the District's Board of Directors (Rick Sackbauer, Paul Testwuide, Tom Allender, and Bill Simmons) and a Vail Resort service provider (Kim Langmaid) occupies a fifth seat. This dominance of the ERWSD Board may become significant as the District rolls out the next phase of its long range \$95 million Master Plan which is slated to cost an additional \$42 million, which will presumably have to be paid for by the District's customers and taxpayers. VRI has a big stake in those plans since the District's Vail treatment plant sits in the middle of VRI's proposed EverVail development. It is no secret that VRI would like to see the treatment plant relocated, but that would have a large price tag, upwards of \$60 million, according to estimates contemplated by officials during the TOV's approval process. If the plant is to be relocated, it should not be at the expense of the District's customers/taxpayers. The VHA will be closely watching developments there.



Proposed Ever Vail Development and ERW&SD Vail Sewer Treatment Plant.

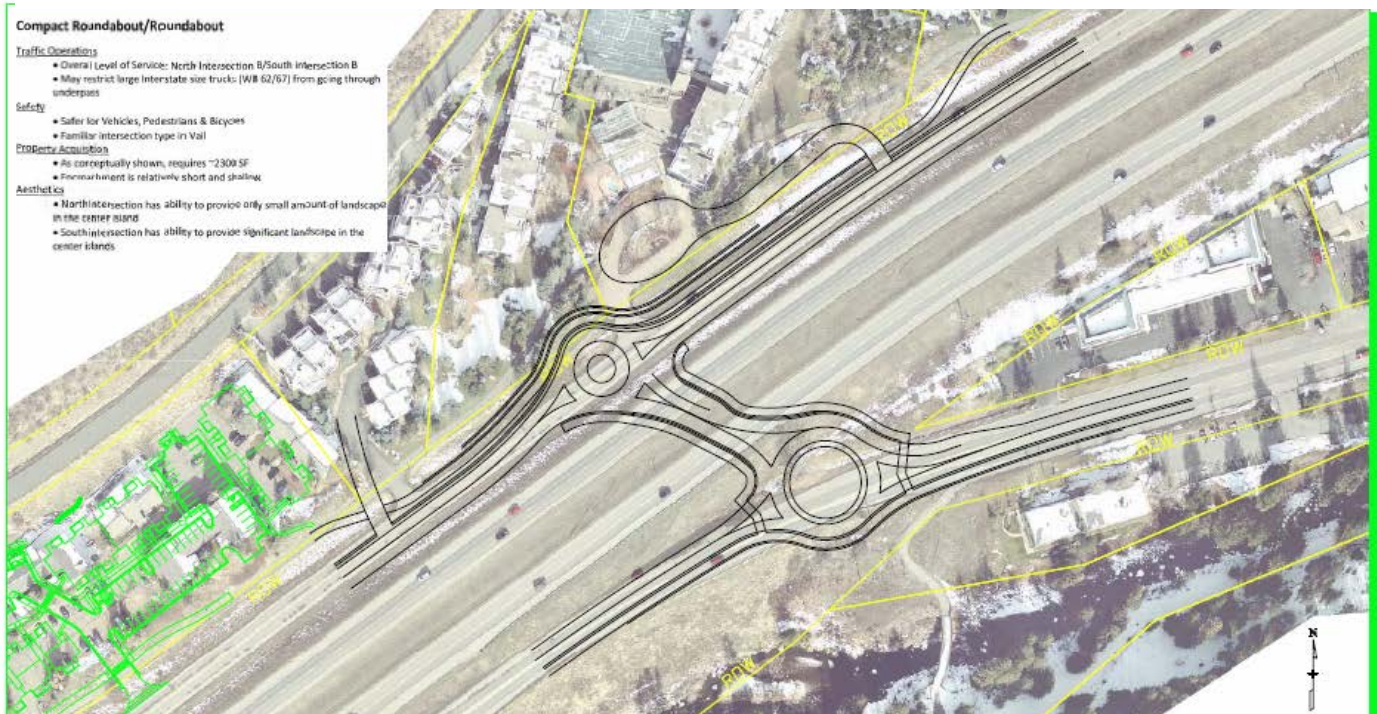
Next Election: The next election for the Vail community is the TOV Town Council election in November of 2015. Four seats will be open as well as a new Mayor elected by the Council. Because of term limits, at least two members of the Council will be new and it is possible that a majority could be new.

In all likelihood, the next Town Council will face final approvals for Vail Resort's massive EverVail project, which is expected to rival the decade long \$1 Billion Vail Renaissance project. A key issue yet to be resolved is the construction of a large (several hundred spaces) public parking garage in the project. VRI intends to retain ownership of that facility. For several decades, the Town has maintained a virtual monopoly over ownership of public parking and it wants a say over the operation of VRI's public parking. For that, VRI wants the Town to finance the cost of building the EverVail public parking garage through the rebate of Tax Increment Financing Funds (TIFF).

It is issues like the financing for the EverVail parking that will make the next TOV elections critical to the long-term future of the community. Yet without mail-in ballots, turnout in the TOV elections has been on the decline since 2001. Prior to the last election, the Town Council decided to no longer maintain a permanent mailing list from election to election for those wanting to automatically be sent an absentee ballot. VHA believes that voting should be encouraged, not made more difficult. As the 2012 elections show, adoption of a permanent mail-in ballot system for the Town elections could go a long way toward improving voter participation.

Permanent Absentee Voting Status is Now Available: As of early 2014, [current state law](#) now provides that eligible electors may request to be put on a permanent absentee voter list with their local government and that the list must be maintained by that local government. Local governments include municipalities, county and special districts. The TOV is in the process of setting up a new permanent absentee voter list for their 2015 municipal election. The Vail Homeowners Association encourages all eligible electors who wish to vote by mail for future elections to submit a request to be placed on the permanent absentee voter list with each of their local governments. [Access information and forms](#) on the VHA website.

Design and location of Simba Run Underpass Currently Under Study



Connecting The Dots – Is A Battle Looming Over TIFF Funds? TIFF Funds are collected by the Town of Vail on new private construction, such as EverVail or a redevelopment of the Evergreen Hotel/Condominiums, based upon the increase in valuation that results. They are a major source of TOV's finances. While TIFF is collected on private projects, municipal and not-for-profit projects are not subject to TIFF so there will be no TIFF generated by the VVMC expansion. The planned Simba Run Underpass, budgeted at \$20.8 million, is already standing in line for TIFF revenues. It also seems likely that

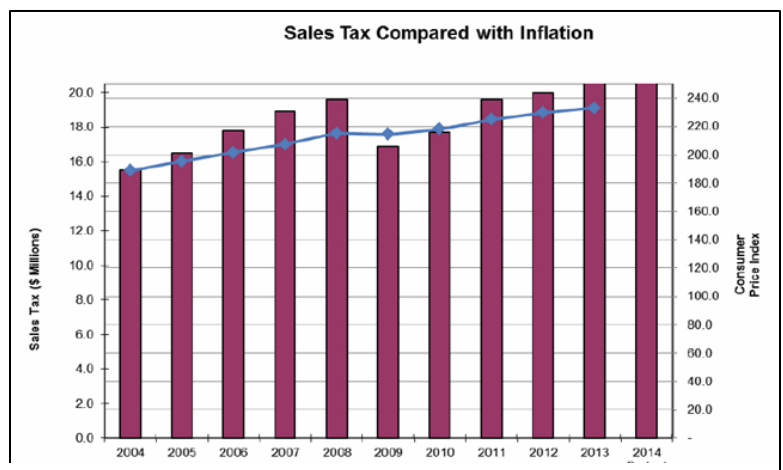
TIFF funding will be required for the TOV's portion of the VVMC expansion and possibly also for the Gore Creek clean-up. With VRI also seeking TIFF rebates for the parking garage construction in its project, there may not be enough funds to cover all of these projects.



Proposed Master Plan for Vail Valley Medical Center and Town of Vail Sites

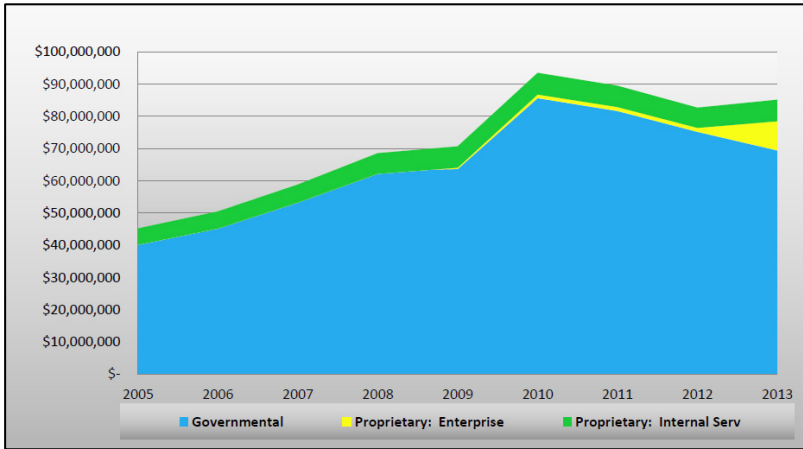
Vail Valley Medical Plans Announced: The long awaited plans for the expansion of the VVMC were announced in June. The Master Plan envisions an expanded campus with most access via Frontage Road with a new Frontage Road round about to facilitate access and a new municipal 250 car parking garage on the TOV site on the north side of Frontage Road connected to the hospital via an underground pedestrian tunnel. The plans go a long way toward addressing many of the neighborhood concerns although several critical issues still remain, namely delivery access to the hospital and the location of the helipad. As part of the overall plan, the TOV may include consideration of the redevelopment of the Evergreen Hotel/Condominiums. There may also be a revival of plans for a new TOV municipal headquarters building. VHA has suggested that all access to the hospital site, including supply delivery, be from the Frontage Road thereby relieving traffic congestion on West Meadow Drive and Vail Road. These are projects that the VHA will be closely watching.

Post 2015 - Refocusing the Vision: In a few short months, Vail will host the FIS World Ski Championships. For some time, the focus of the



Town of Vail Sales Tax Revenues for the past decade.

community has been on preparing for that event and the TOV has done much to spruce up the community and prepare to host the world. Once the world leaves, it will be time to focus on the future.



The Town of Vail has spent down its reserve funds for the past several years.

on going forward with views ranging from increased entertainment/special events to marketing fairs to focusing on quality over quantity.

At the same time, there is concern in some circles that Vail has lost focus on its premier goal of being a world-class international resort community with commensurate recreational, cultural and educational opportunities for both visitors and residents. An increasing number are asking whether Vail is trying to be all things to all customers -- a premier international resort, a cultural destination, a Front Range vacation get-away and a valley-wide entertainment center -- and whether resident concerns are being pushed aside by business interests who predominate consideration of key developmental projects. In other words, if we do not refocus and articulate a clear vision for the future are we in danger of losing what brought many of us here? The Town's recently released 2014 community survey ([see summary of recent TOV Community Survey](#)) was not very meaningful or helpful as responses to many of the questions, with only a few exceptions, lacked specificity. There was a cautionary note about weakness in public engagement and collaborative decision making, which should be addressed and incorporated in any forward looking strategic plan. And there was a strong consensus to clean up Gore Creek. If anything, the lack of specificity in the survey results mean it's even more necessary that there be leadership in determining a clear vision for Vail's future. The VHA believes that the period following the 2015 championships will be an excellent time to pause and reset priorities going forward.

Biking Improvements: The TOV and VRI are to be commended for improving bike trails this summer. The TOV has been expanding bike lanes on north and south Frontage Roads. VRI improved and expanded [bike trails](#) on Vail Mountain. As a result, the TOV was recently given a bicycle-friendly silver award by the League of American Bicyclists. With the popular USA Pro Cycling Challenge holding its signature time trial in Vail and an increasing number of other popular recreational rides, Vail is poised to become a world-class biking community and achieve gold level status.

In many ways it appears that the future is bright. The Town of Vail ([see synopsis of 2013 TOV Financial Statement](#)) is once again experiencing positive economic growth with sales tax revenues exceeding pre-recession (2007) levels. [Local real estate sales](#) are on the upswing, [foreclosures](#) are at the lowest levels in years and unemployment is down but not to pre-recession levels. A recent assessment of how Vail is doing in comparison with other mountain resort communities showed that Vail has been a leader in recovery from the Great Recession, but is still in need of more economic development, with the summer season being a prime candidate for improvement. Unfortunately, there is no consensus



Expanded Vail Mountain Summer Bike Routes - [click to enlarge image.](#)



Betty Ford Alpine Garden Poppies

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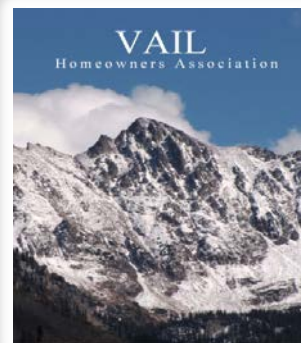
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