



July 4th on West Meadow Drive.

VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Letters to Vail

Vail Marketing and Mobility: Part One August 1, 2024

One thing, above all others that Vail can proudly hold up as world class, is the TOV's Public Works Department. The 2024 Go Vail - Mobility Transportation plan follows in the Department's tradition of forecasting practical and pragmatic visions of future transportation needs.

As goes transportation, so goes the economy. Newly released mobility and economic development plans are being implemented via the Town's strategies guided by recommendations in the Vail Stewardship Roadmap that was adopted in June 2023. As with water and other resources, it is necessary to forecast impacts of the Town's tourism marketing goals and strategies. Vail Resorts (VR) is marketing the Epic Pass and is not investing in tourism marketing for the Town.

The TOV's 2024 Mobility and Transportation Master Plan approach may not sufficiently respond to the 2024 USFS Mountain Development Plan (MDP) and the TOV's new economic development direction. The MDP

creates many questions regarding traffic access to five total lift base areas accessing Vail Mountain, which includes a new base area for West Lionshead. To some degree the capacity of lifts on Vail Mountain sets the limitations of mountain visitation.

The Mobility Plan transitions away from a focus on parking more and more vehicles to a greater reliance upon mass transportation, and supplemented in summer with personal conveyances. Eagle County is expanding its down valley bus service under a voter approved tax initiative that now funds more fare-free service as is the Town of Vail within its service area.

Traffic capacity limits have been reached on local and highway corridors during high seasons and in inclement weather. The effectiveness of new traffic controls in high demand corridors such as West Meadow Drive and Vail Valley Drive have yet to be tested. The success of Vail’s Check Point Charlie, where vehicular access to the heart of Vail Village is limited, began decades ago and has endured and flourished. The concept could be expanded to include surrounding neighborhoods. The same should be considered on a broader scale with variations for the community’s five ski bases if the proposed capacity become reality.

The area including the Vail Village Transportation Center is currently proposed as an expanded mass transit and individual vehicle drop-off/pick-up terminal but it is unnecessarily restricted. Previously circulated concepts provide for bridging the Frontage Road and portions of Interstate 70 at the Transportation Center where the drop-off and pick-up function for Vail Village and Golden Peak could be staged. A similar approach is possible at the other base area terminals.



Schematic design of bus terminal and vehicular drop-off/pick-up expansion at the Vail Village Transportation Center.

Balancing the number of visitors drawn by TOV and VR marketing efforts should assist in shaping collateral transportation and housing strategies as projected demands become more predictable. Today there is greater appreciation for the difficulties encountered should overcrowding continue occurring.



Traffic backup from Vail Pass summer construction, similar to winter backups related to weather related I-70 closures.

The bane of the Vail community's traffic flow is the gridlock caused by the closure of Interstate 70 which occurs frequently, especially in winter months. Diverting traffic away from I-70 is extremely difficult. Trucks are no longer held back during closures at Dotsero 50 miles west of Vail, causing massive backups in Vail. One view is that the situation would be improved if there were enhanced coordination between the Eagle County sheriff, municipal police departments within the county and Colorado State Patrol.

Close behind the Public Works Department achievements are the Town's marketing efforts to stabilize the community economy. The Town is streamlining the administration of publicly funded events and promotions. The Town's Economic Development Department will take on administration of scheduling and funding special events. The Commission on Special Events (CSE) was designed to ensure that the sponsored events accrue as lifestyle benefits for those living in the community as well as bringing in and entertaining guests. A risk in changing the administrative process is that it could slant public investment increasingly toward tourism rather than community building.

The departmental adjustments may be a response to the TOV embracing recommendations in the 2023 Vail Stewardship Roadmap menu on carrying capacities. New guidelines are based upon the evaluation and administration of carrying capacities for key functions in the public interest. Knowing carrying capacities gives the ability to market toward an appropriate mix of tourist and resident populations. Like adjusting the flow of a water faucet, marketing in the modern age can be used to assist in maintaining a balance between workforce, residents and visitors. The aim is to shape marketing messaging that is supportive of the community infrastructure and social caregiving needs.

The world has entered a new era of global tourism. Vail is a hub in the network of superior resort communities. Local communities must defend against the detrimental influences of pervasive and invasive tourism. Vail must continue to embrace the concept of developing guidelines to control tourism levels in a manner that benefits building a local community along with meeting economic needs.

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