



VR and USFS amendments to the Vail Master Development Plan has long-term consequences for the Vail community.

# Letters to Vail

VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

**Vail's Congestion and Worker Housing Issues - Vail Master Development Plan**

**April 11, 2024**

In mid-February, Vail Resorts (VR) and the United States Forest Service (USFS) announced an agreement on a [2024 amendment to the Vail Master Development Plan \(VMDP\)](#). The amendment and its effects upon prior adopted versions of the Vail Mountain Development Plan are subject to public review and comment. There are significant items raised in the documentation of the 2024 plan that affect the Vail community.

In response to [public criticism](#) of VR about on-mountain congestion and lack of housing, the plan provides for extensive upgrades to the mountain lift system and support facilities. The intent of the upgrades is to expedite the distribution of visitors throughout the mountain facilities. The amendment lays the ground work to increase on-mountain capacity by 5000 visitors. Community issues such as housing, parking and traffic are not addressed in the VMDP. Neither VR nor the USFS reveal data and algorithms necessary to calibrate and verify the effects of the mountain's carrying capacity upon the Vail community. This practice may change as a [Utah district court decision upheld the ability of the Park City Planning Commission to analyze carrying capacity data as a condition of approving proposed lifts, parking and lodges.](#)

Federal regulatory practices included in the current mountain master planning and environmental protection processes provides the latitude for consideration of community impacts. As a result of the Utah decision, the TOV and the public may now have an opening to access the tools and information to comprehensively evaluate the impacts of the 2024 VMDP. The Vail community is in the unique position to affect changes to the Mountain Development Plan as the foundational development plans of the 1960s predated the incorporation of the TOV.

The foundational plans worked hand in hand, as they should today, to determine the development of both the mountain and the town.

The anticipated increase in visitors opens up a host of related impacts that affect the Vail community's functionality and quality of life. Public concerns include understanding how new and expanded Vail Mountain base areas and increased skier/boarder traffic impact vehicular traffic, public transportation, parking and associated workforce housing. The 2024 plan does not address worker housing estimated by VHA to be 500 additional workers nor does the plan address impacts related to traffic and transportation on the community.

Independent of but related to the publication of the 2024 VMDP, [The Vail Police Department VPD\) has cited public safety issues](#) as reason to reevaluate skier drop-off traffic on Hanson Ranch Road. Changes to the skier drop-off are slated to begin in winter 2024-25. The VPD raised issues that should, and likely can, be addressed in the TOV's 2024 mobility amendment to its Master Transportation Plan for the community.

The Vail Master Development Plan has yet to be evaluated according to the international tourism standards adopted by the TOV in the 2023 Sustainability Roadmap. A requirement to assess the impacts upon the local community, year-round and part-time residents and property owners is included in the standards. Current trends in population decrease in Vail and other Eagle County communities indicate that [commercial tourism, both on the mountain and in the Town, is draining diversity from the community's local population.](#)

Traffic issues in the Golden Peak area, including Hanson Ranch Road (HRR), continue to be a focus of VHA advocacy. The VMDP provides for improvements to be made at the West Lionshead base area. Adjustments to Golden Peak traffic issues can be anticipated with development of transportation and maintenance terminals at the West Lionshead base area in addition to reimagining the Vail Village parking structure into a primary pick-up/drop-off hub for the Town.

The proposed West Lionshead mountain portal revives the opportunity to provide housing for on-mountain workers in conjunction with transportation and VR vehicle maintenance improvements. The door is opening to resume discussion of developing a West Lionshead base area facility as a necessary supporting element to proceeding with the 2024 amendments.

The Vail Homeowners Association assists in coordinating neighborhood residential interests to participate in processes addressing functionality and quality of life issues related to the development of Vail. It is advised that affected property owners take steps to assist VHA in organizing awareness and collaborative responses to abate traffic congestion and related issues occurring as a result of base area expansions. The neighborhoods most affected are accessed by streets including Vail Valley Drive, Vail Road, Lionshead Circle, Forest Road and the South Frontage Road. Please [provide email contact information to receive updates about these matters.](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

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](mailto:vailhomeownersassoc@gmail.com)

Post Office Box 238 Vail, Colorado 81658

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

Copyright: 2024

\*\*\*\*\*